

Immigration Reform and Agriculture Conference:
Implications for Farmers, Farm Workers, and Communities
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Changing Characteristics of U.S. Farm Workers:
21 Years of Findings from the National Agricultural Workers Survey

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* Disclaimer: Any views expressed or interpretations of the data made in this presentation are solely those of the authors





National Agricultural Worker Survey (NAWS)

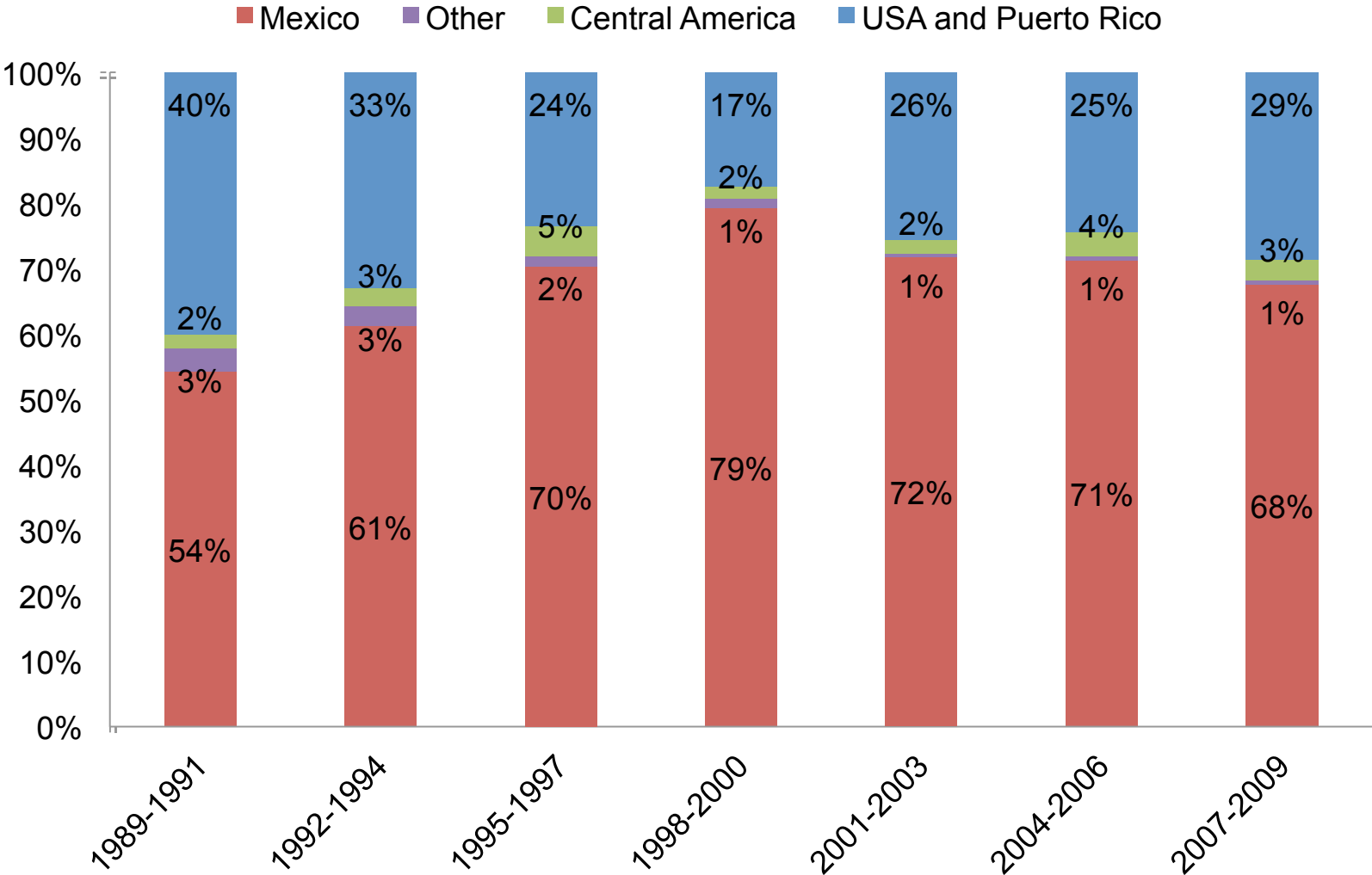
- NAWS is a nationally representative random sample survey of hired crop farm workers; it is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor and conducted by JBS International, Aguirre Division.
- NAWS collects demographic, employment, and health information directly from farm workers through face-to-face interviews.
- Various Federal agencies use NAWS information for program purposes.
- The survey is in its 23rd year.
- Since 1989, more than 54,000 workers have been interviewed.



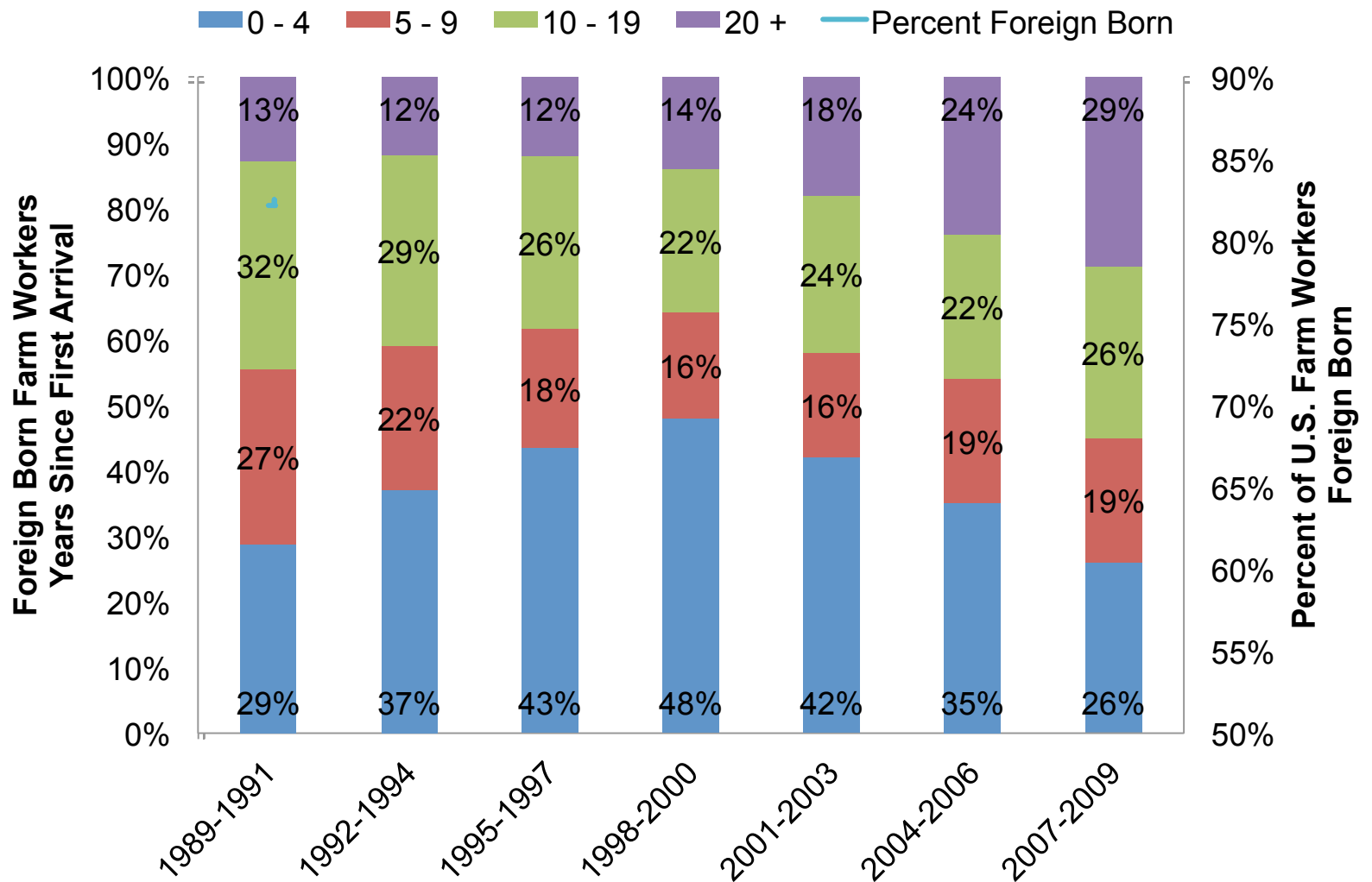
Overview

- Demographic Characteristics
- Employment Characteristics
- Earnings, Income and Public Assistance Characteristics

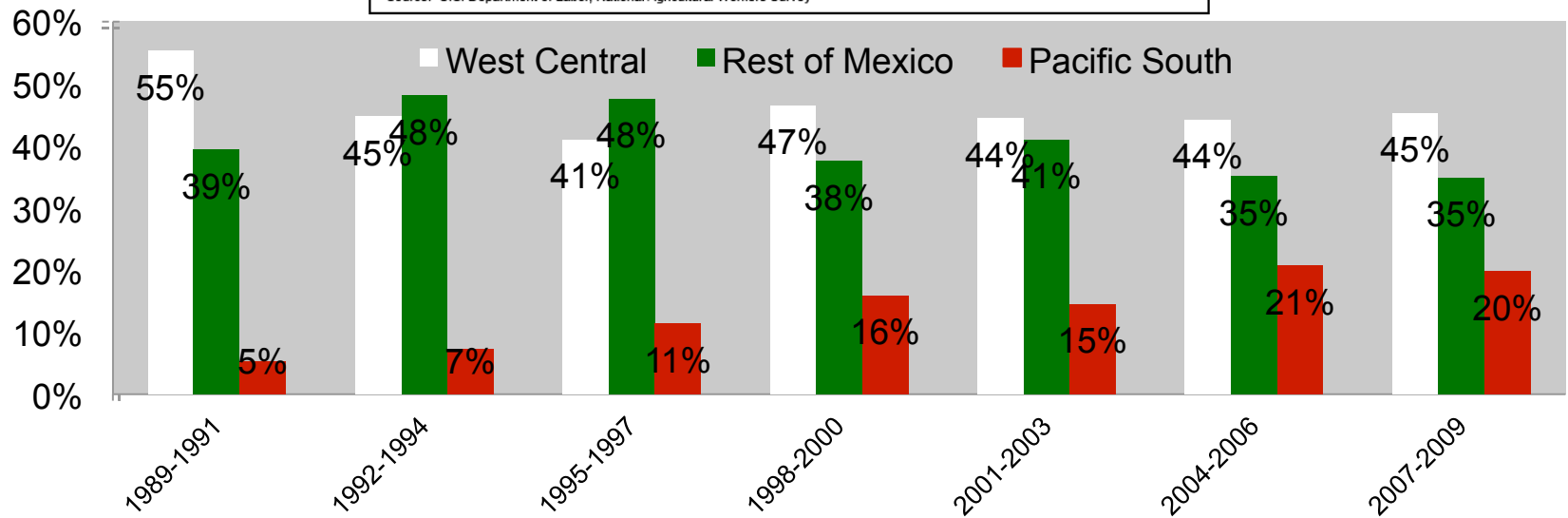
Demographics Place of Birth



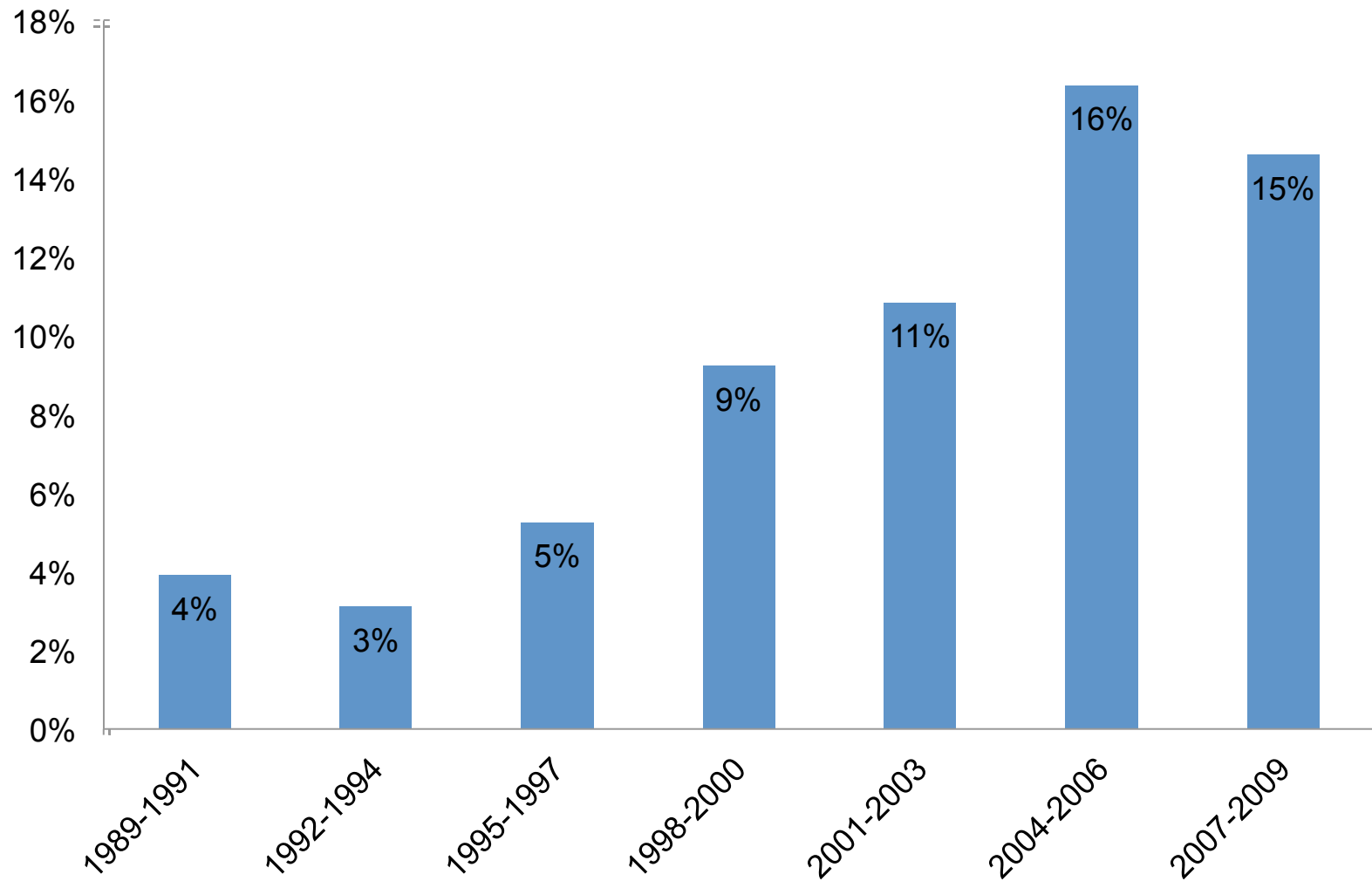
Foreign Born: Years Since First Arrival



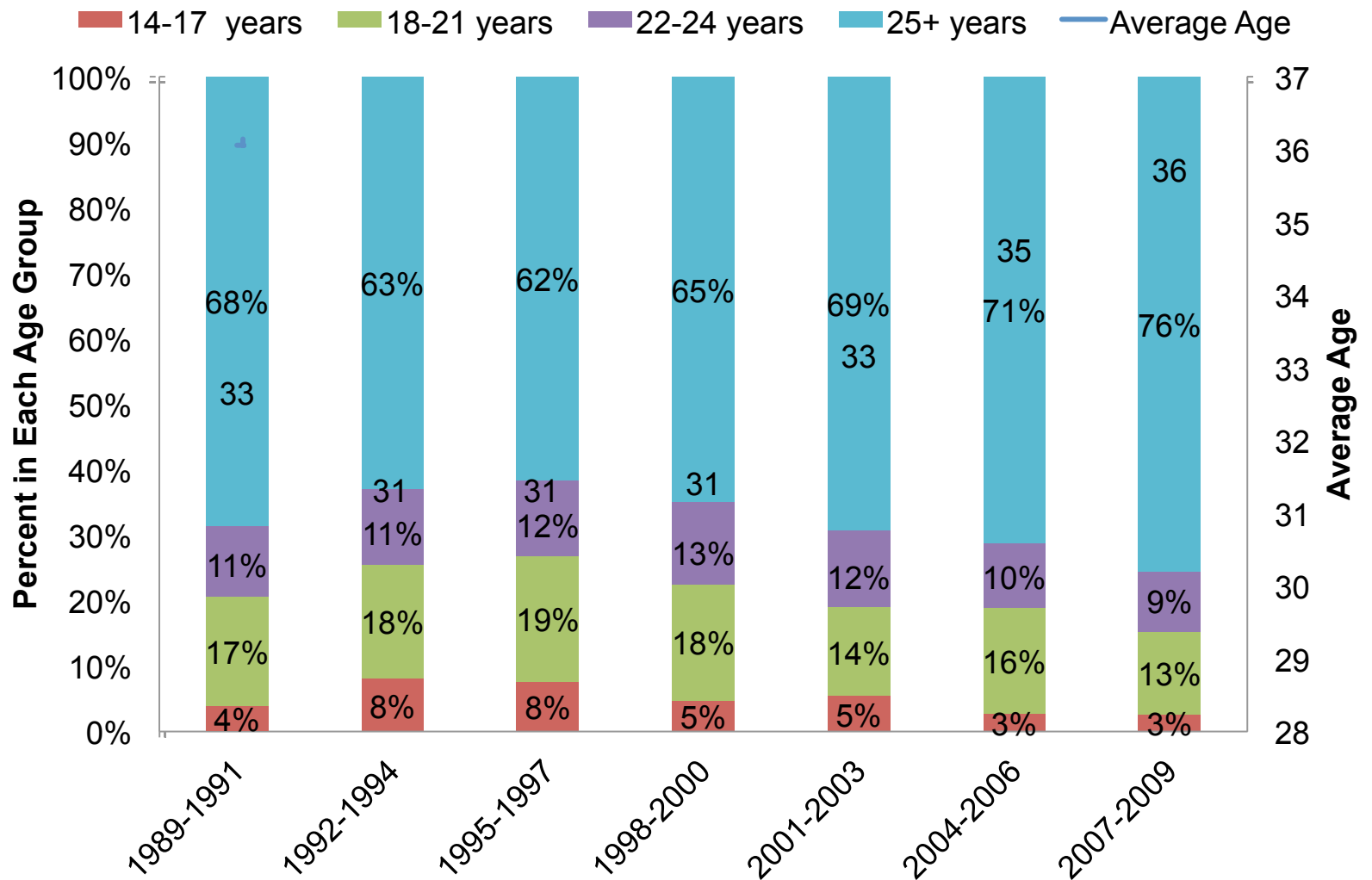
Shifts in Mexico Sending Regions



Indigenous Mexicans and Central Americans

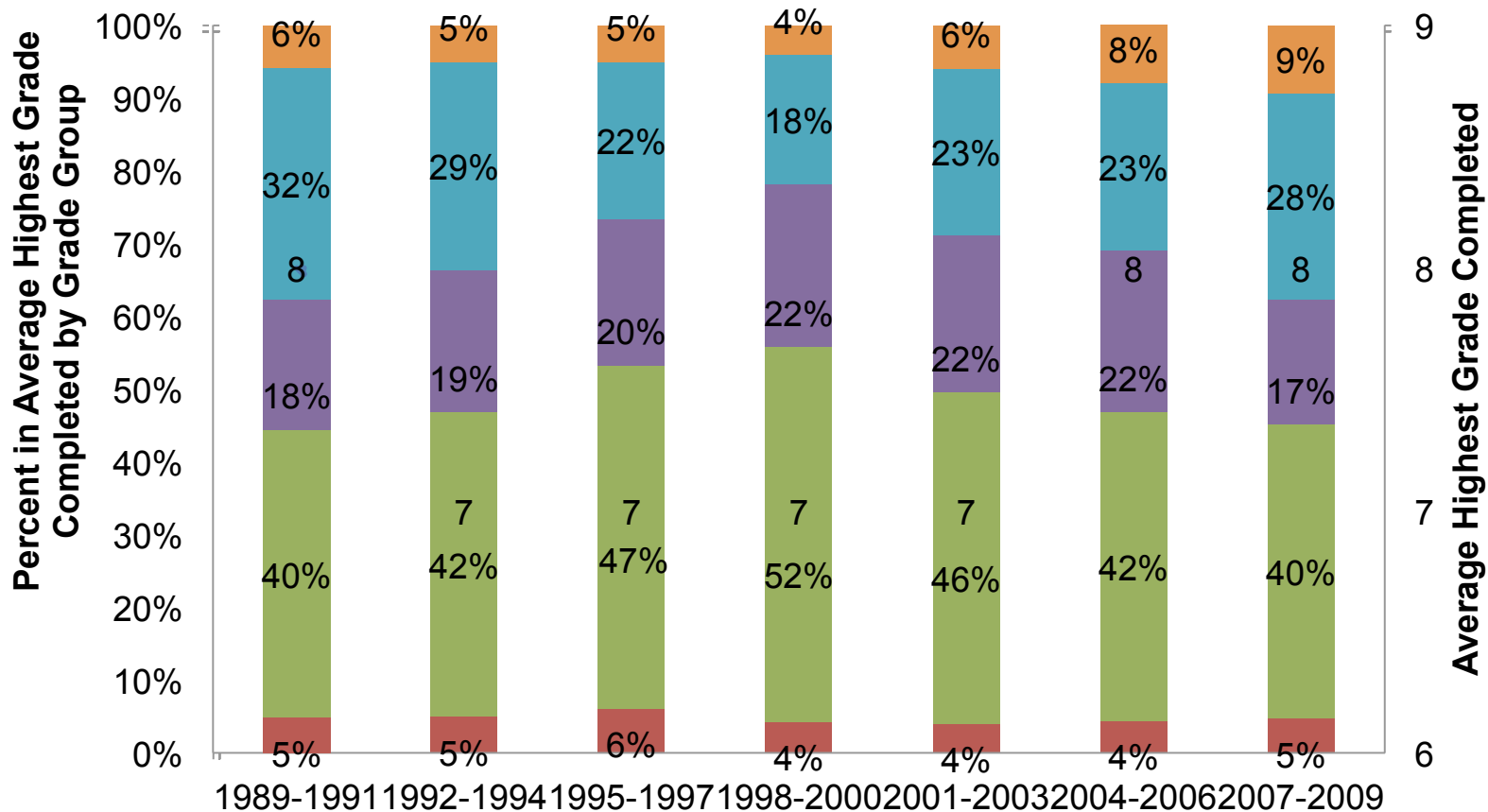


Farm Worker Age



Farm Worker Education

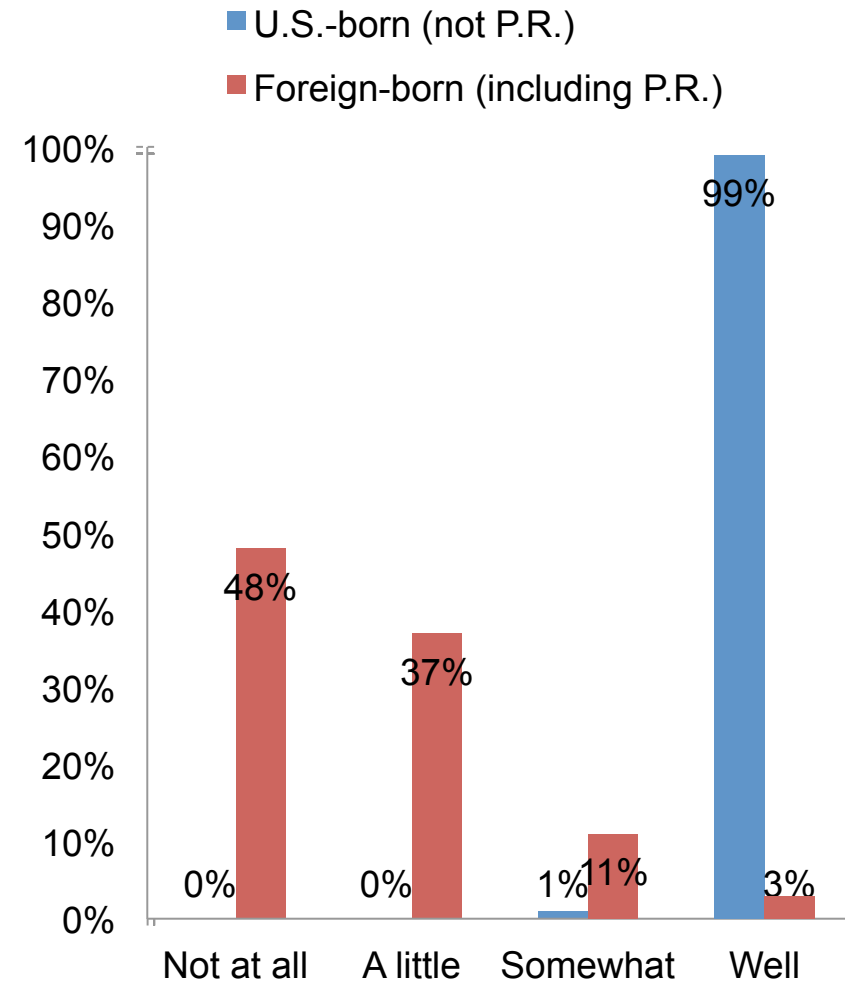
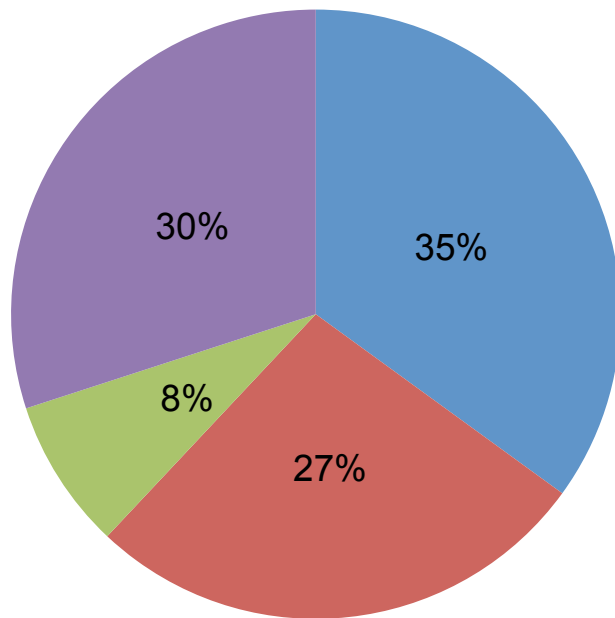
- No Primary
- Middle (7-9 years)
- Post-Secondary (13-16 years)
- Primary (1-6 years)
- High School (10-12 years)
- Average highest grade completed



2007 – 2009: English Speaking Ability

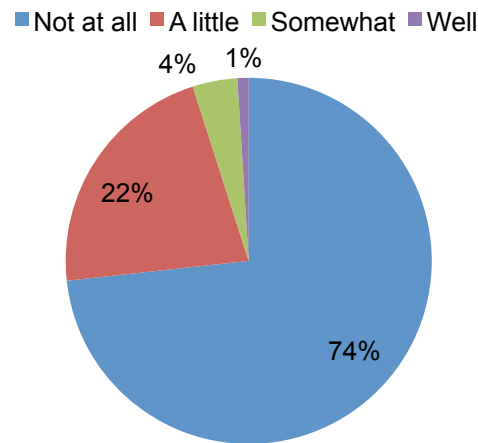
All U.S. Farm Workers

■ Not at all ■ A little ■ Somewhat ■ Well

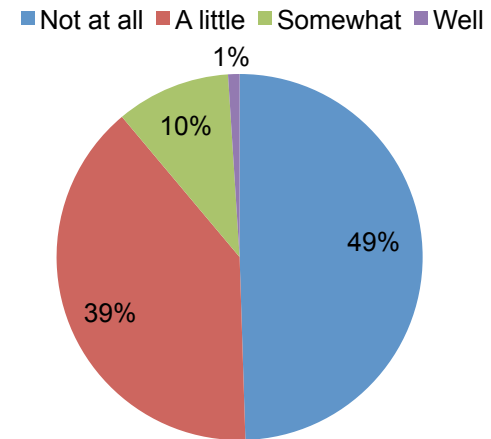


2007 – 2009: Foreign Born English Speaking Ability

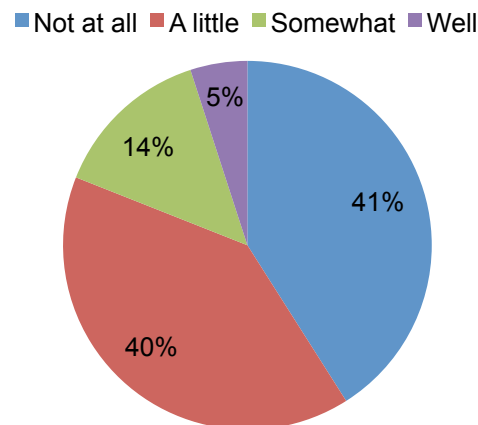
0 - 4 Years Since First Arrival to U.S



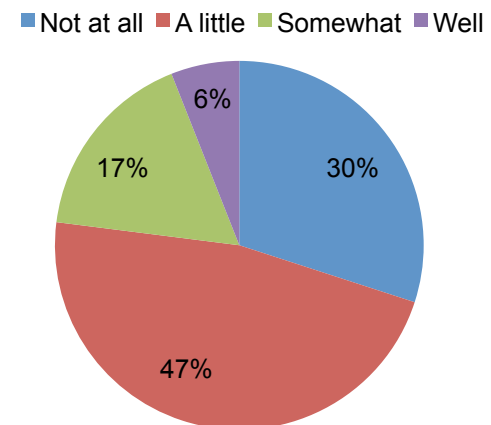
5 - 9 Years Since First Arrival to U.S



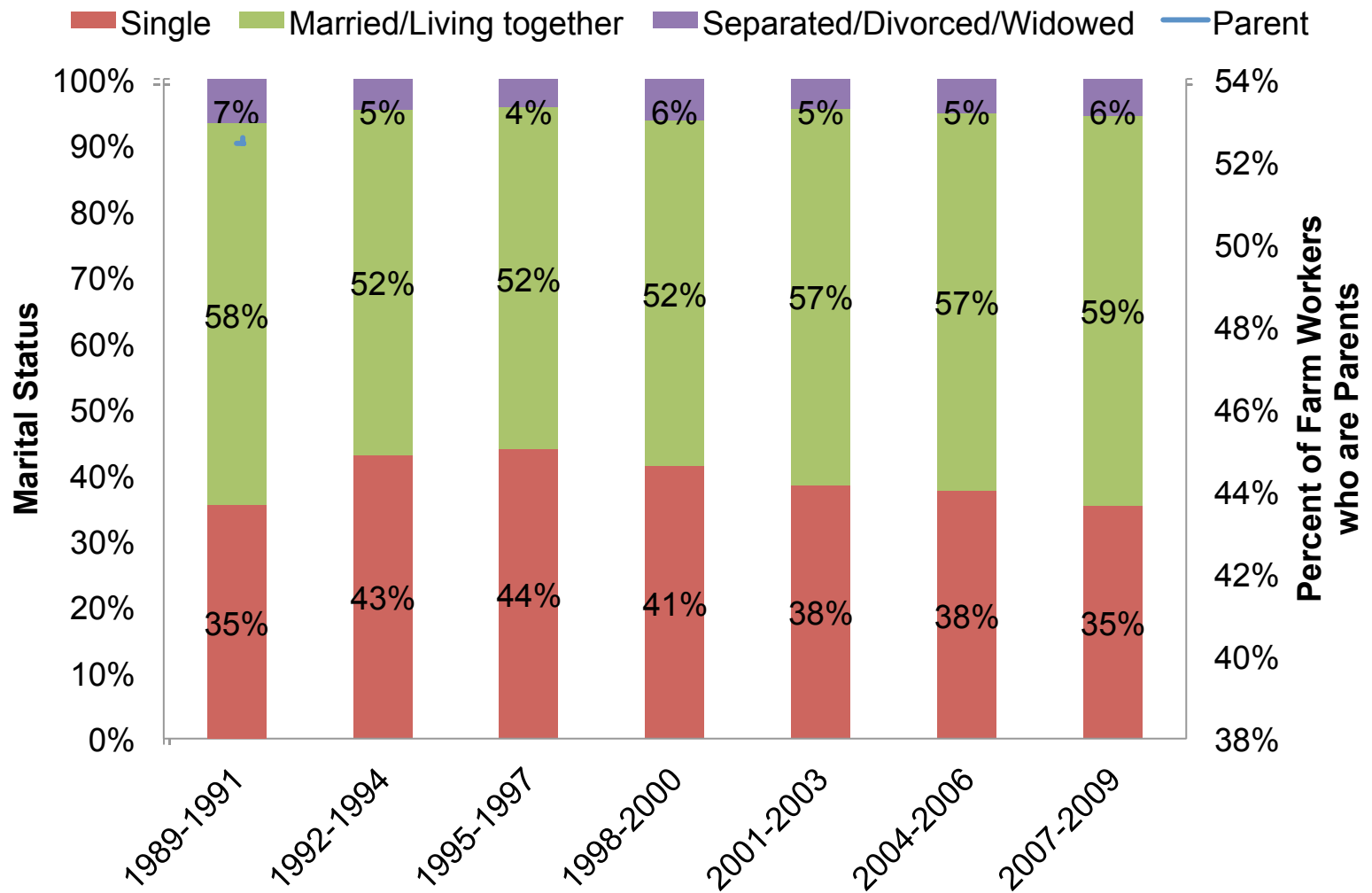
10 - 19 Years Since First Arrival to U.S



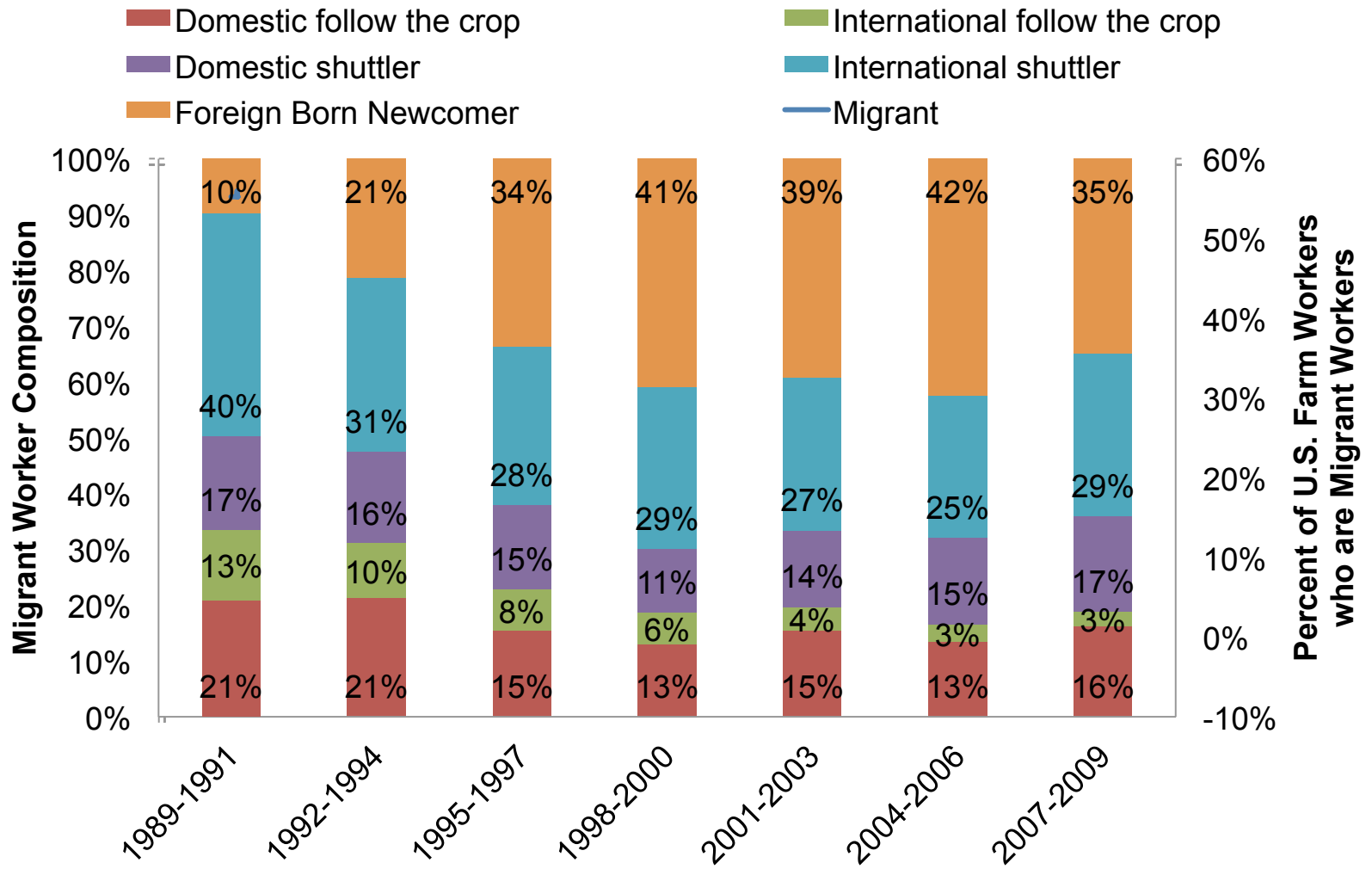
20+ Years Since First Arrival to U.S



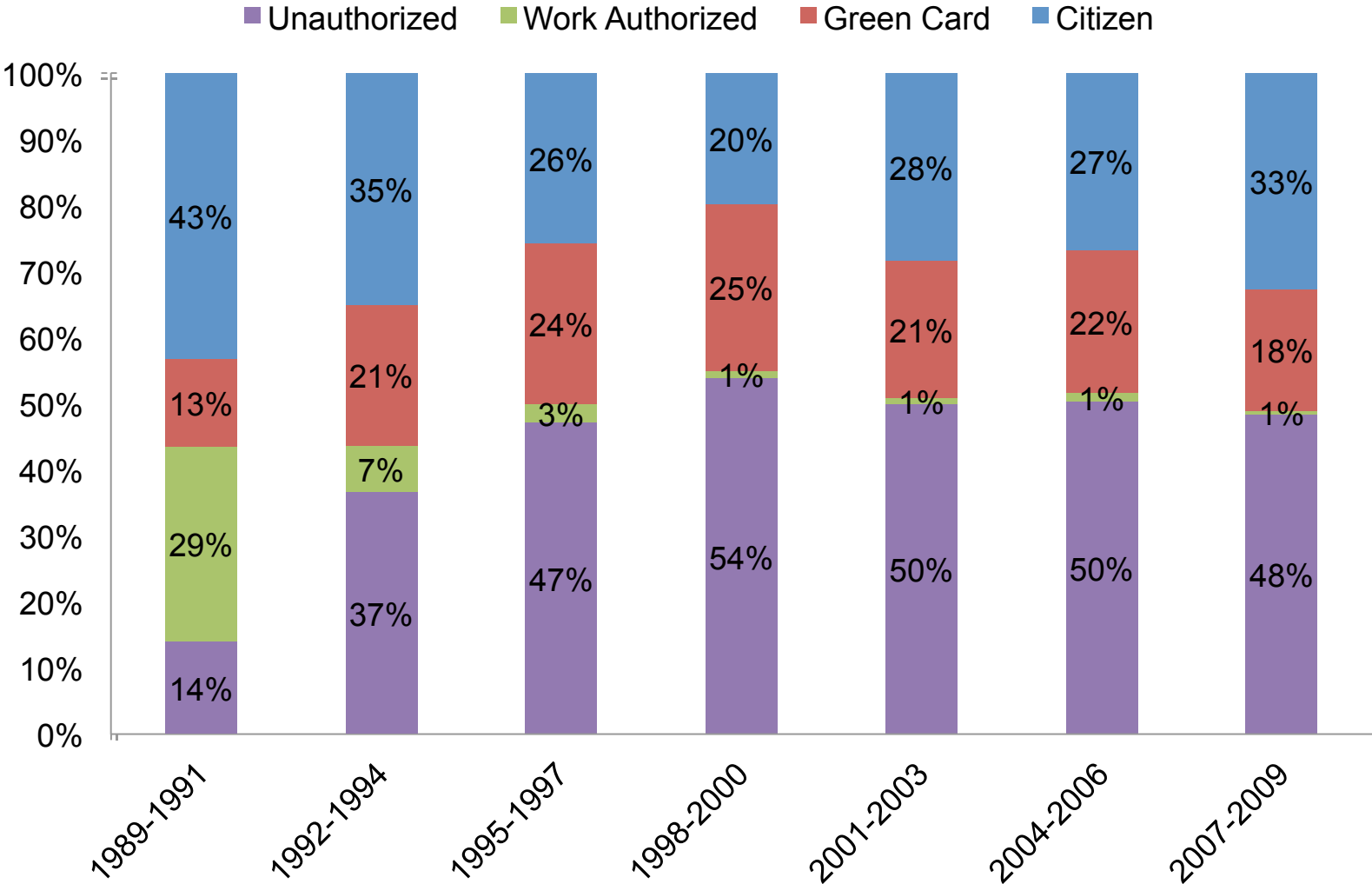
Marital Status



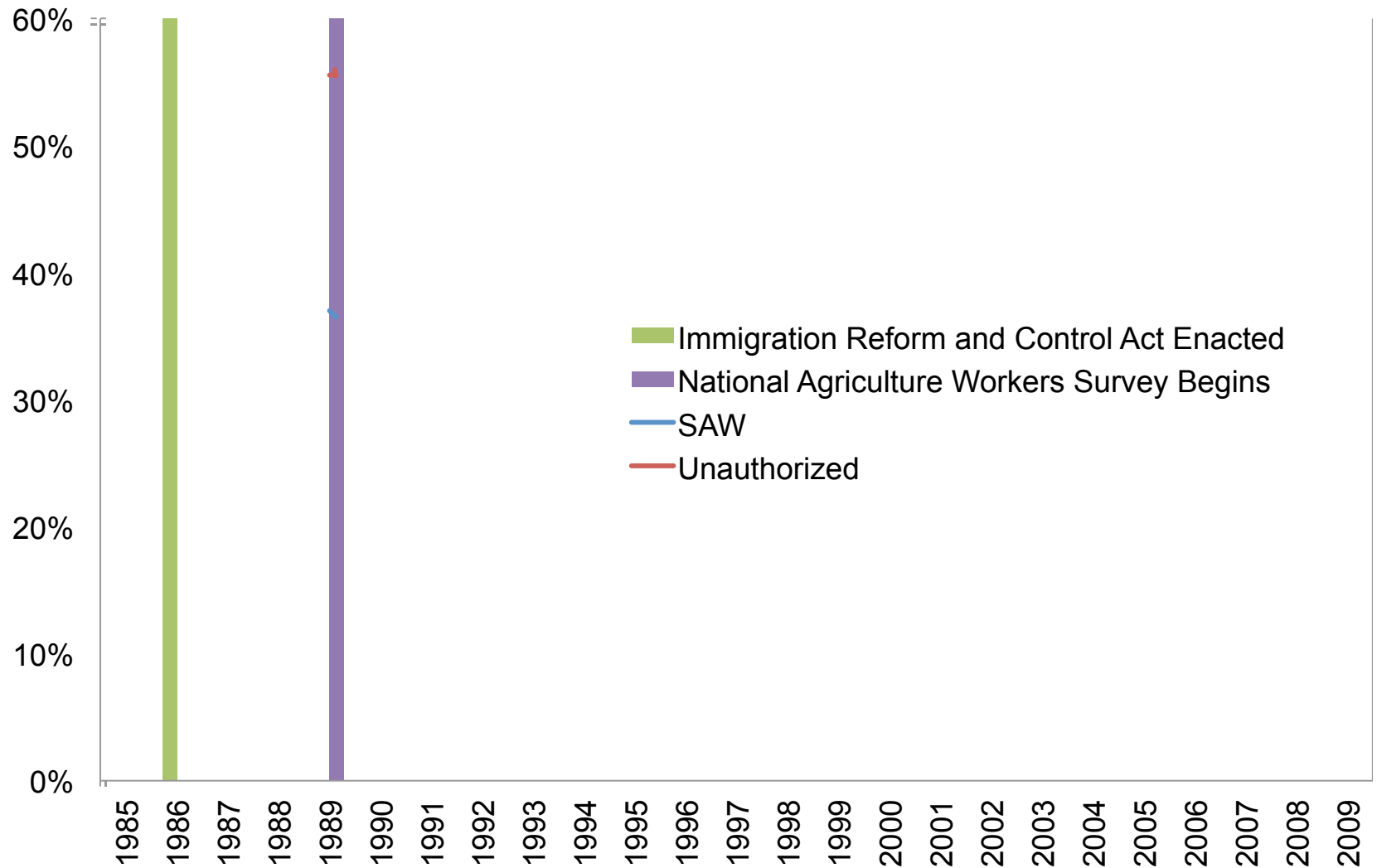
Migrant Type



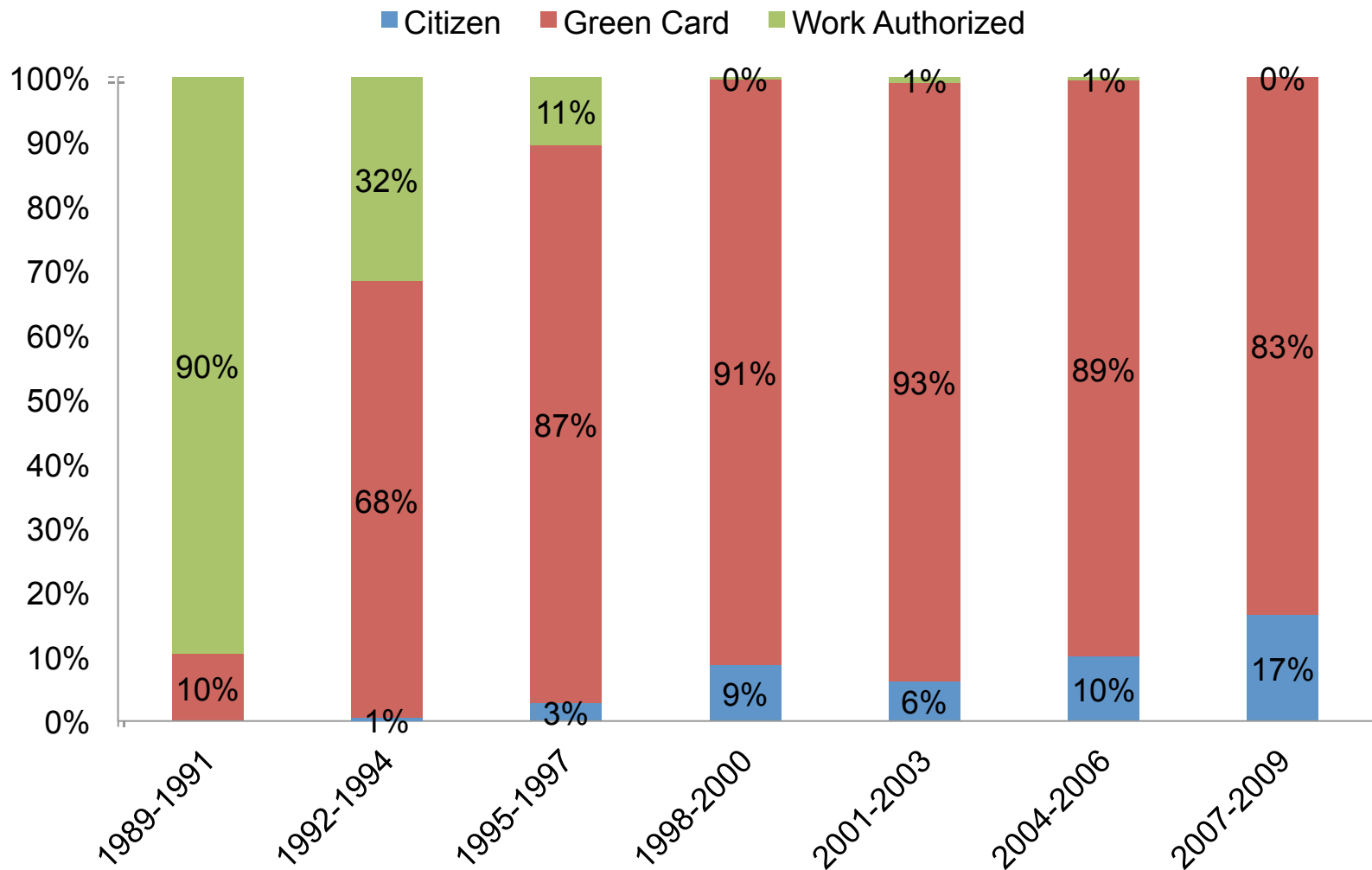
Current Status



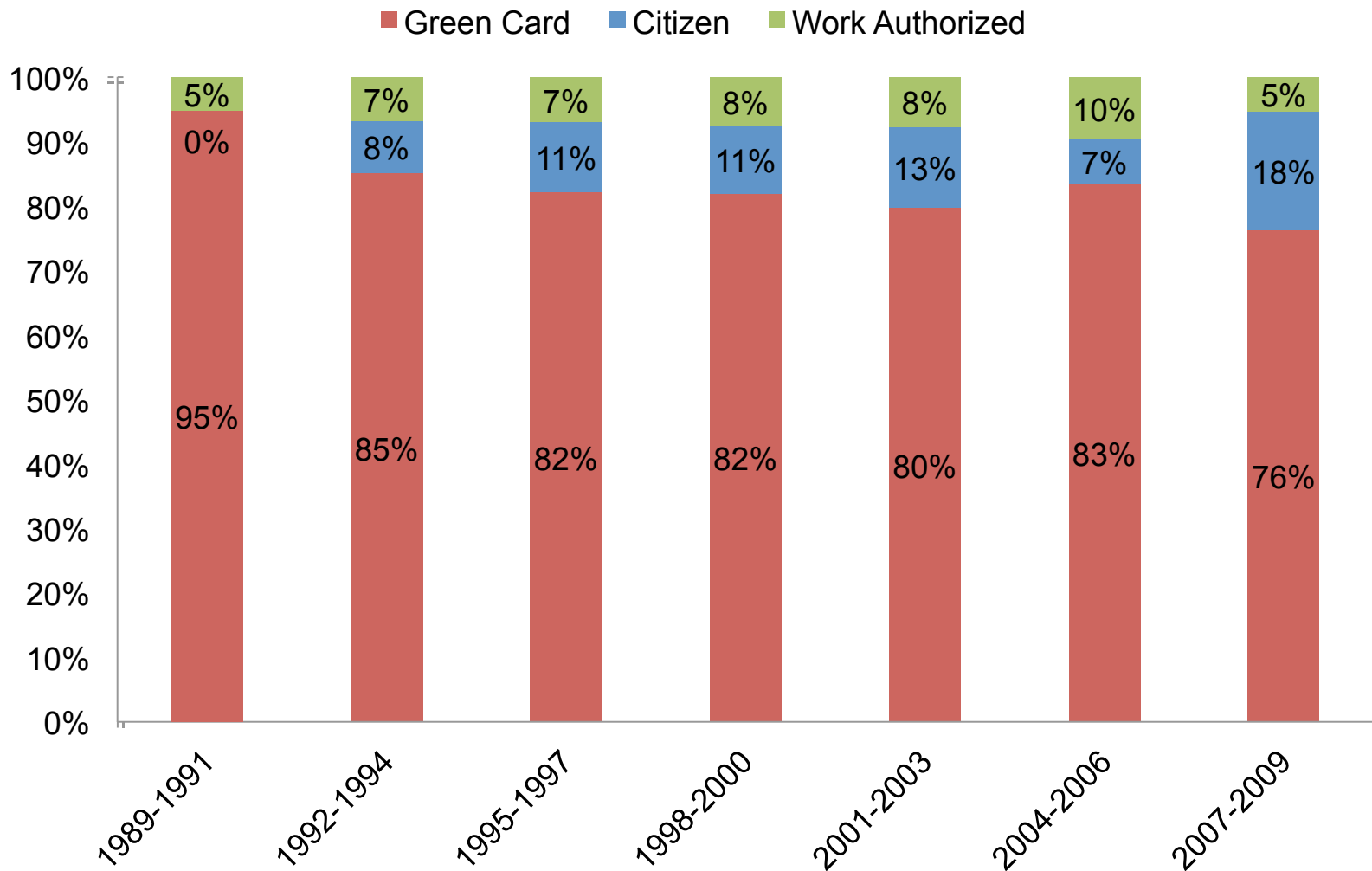
Special Agricultural Workers (SAW) and Unauthorized Farm Workers



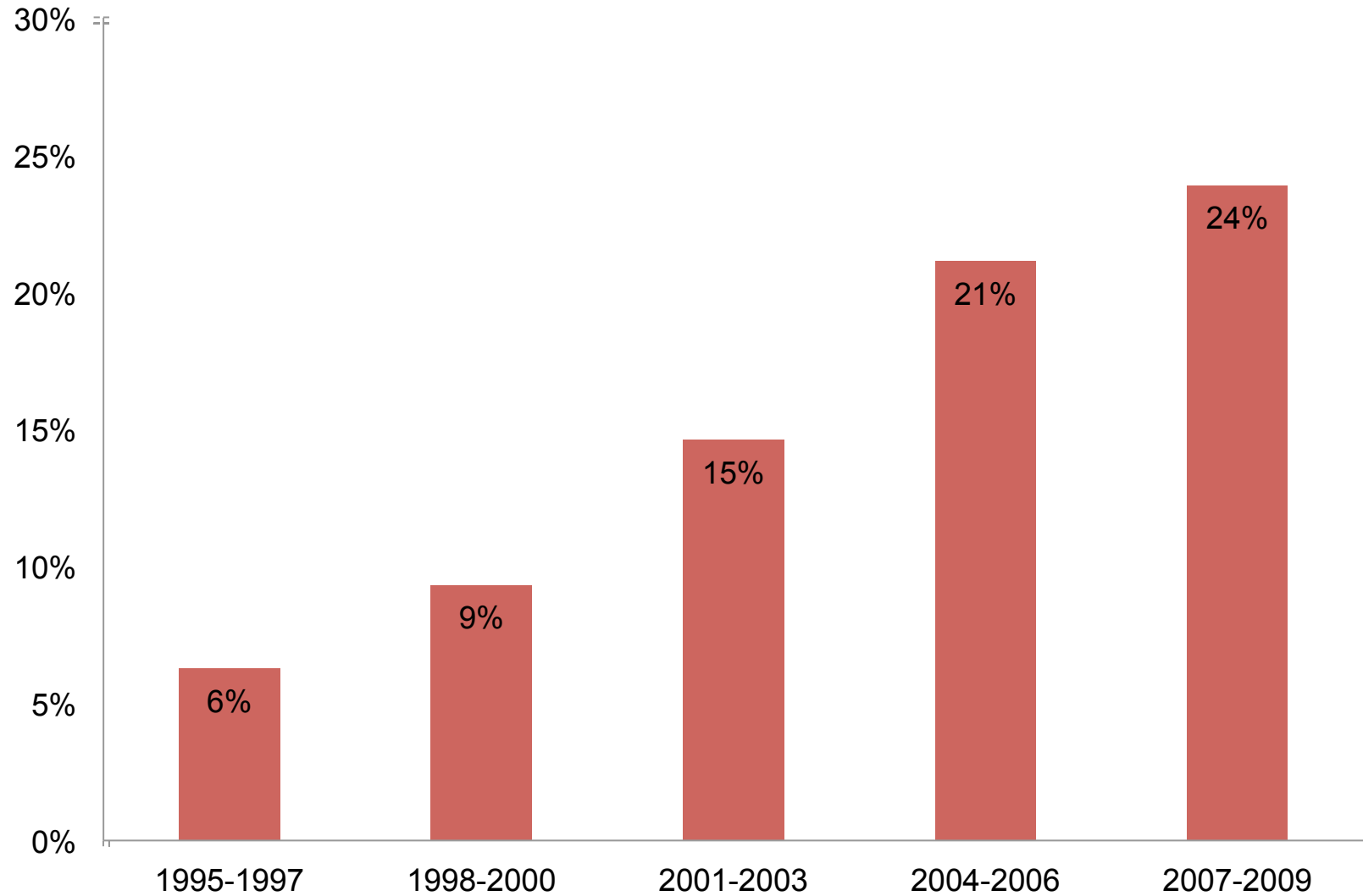
Current Status of 1986 IRCA-Legalized



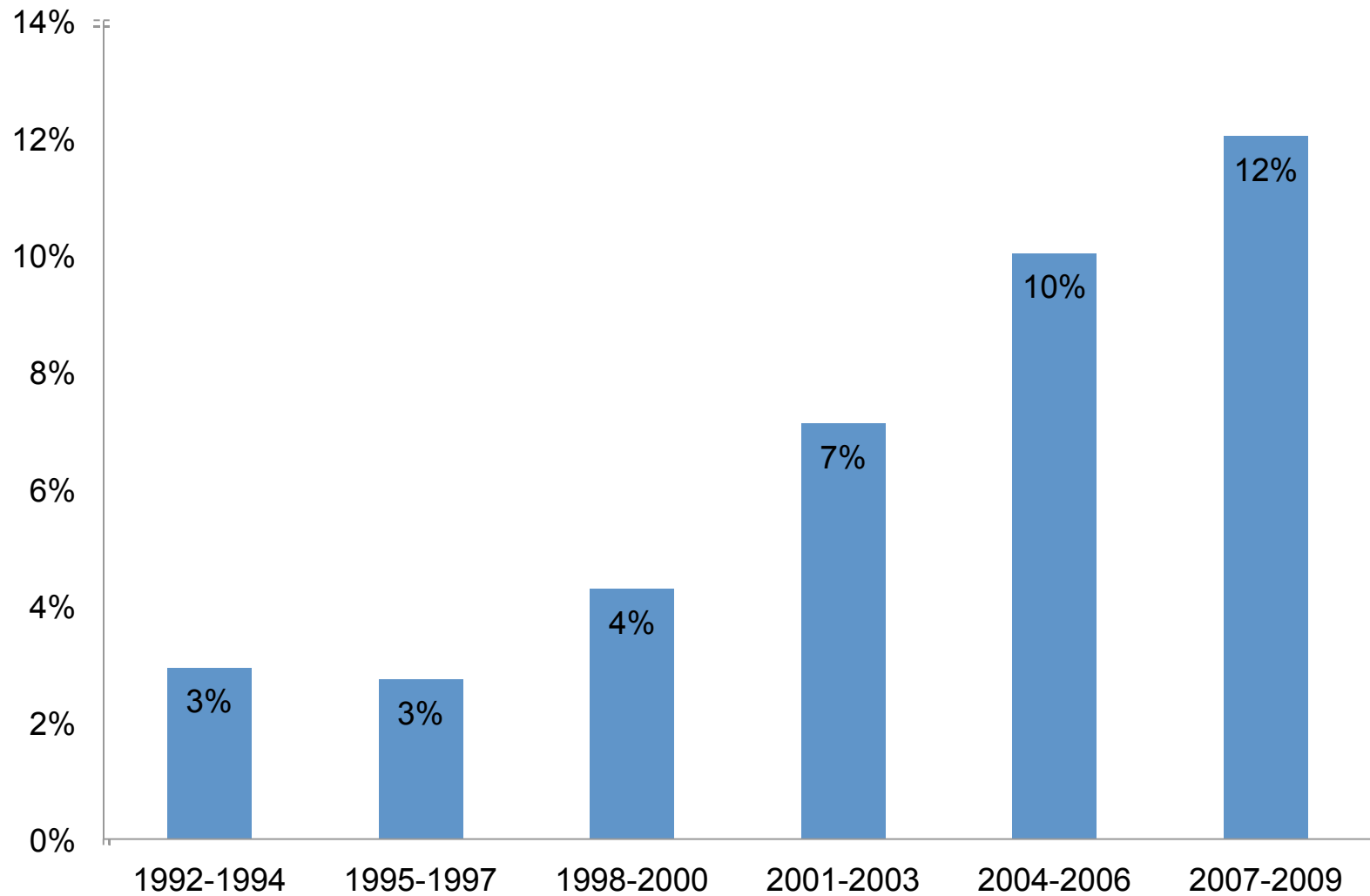
Current Status of those Legalized through Family Programs



Mixed Status Families as a Percentage of Families



Mixed Status Families as a Percentage of all FWs

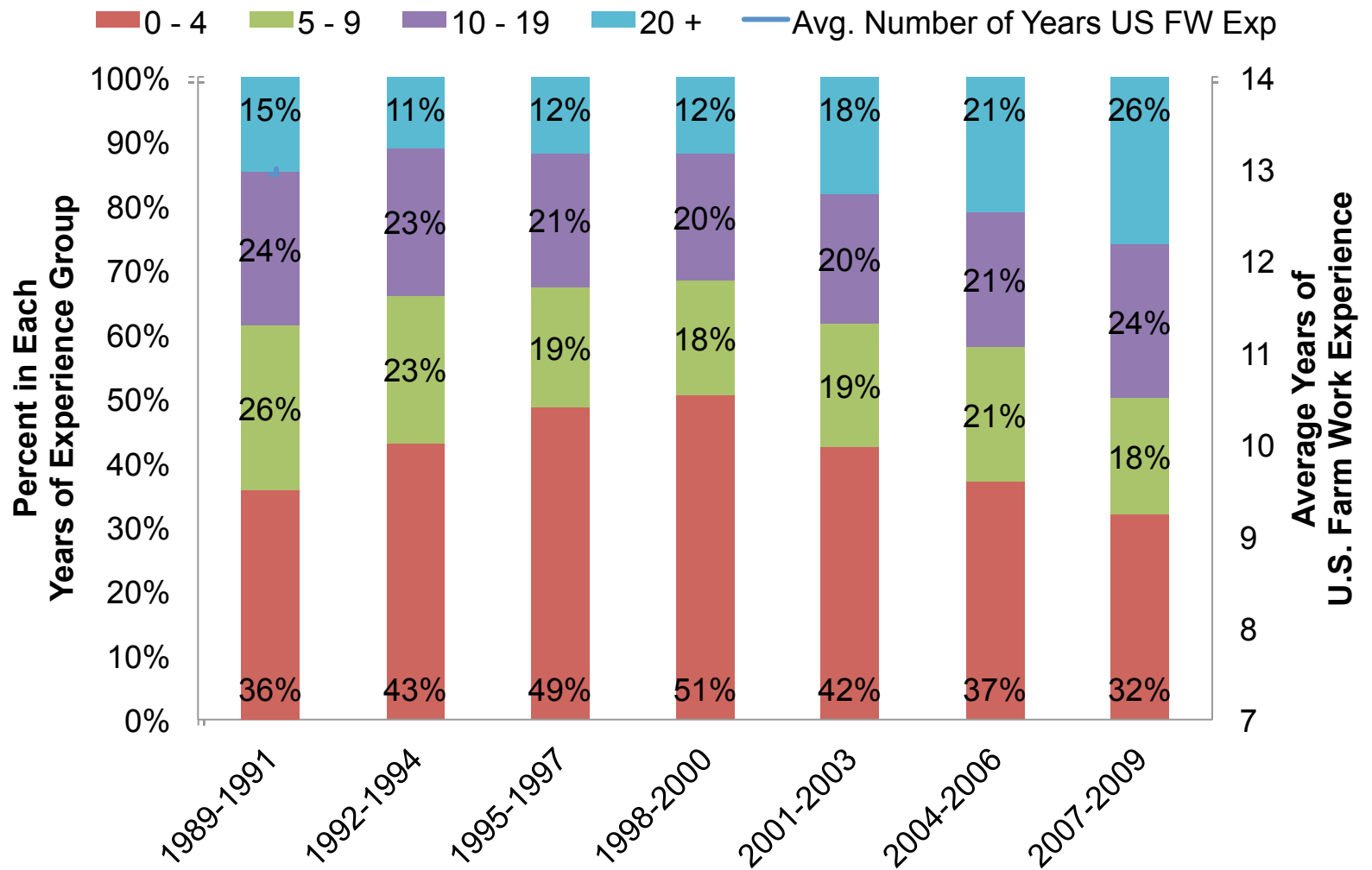




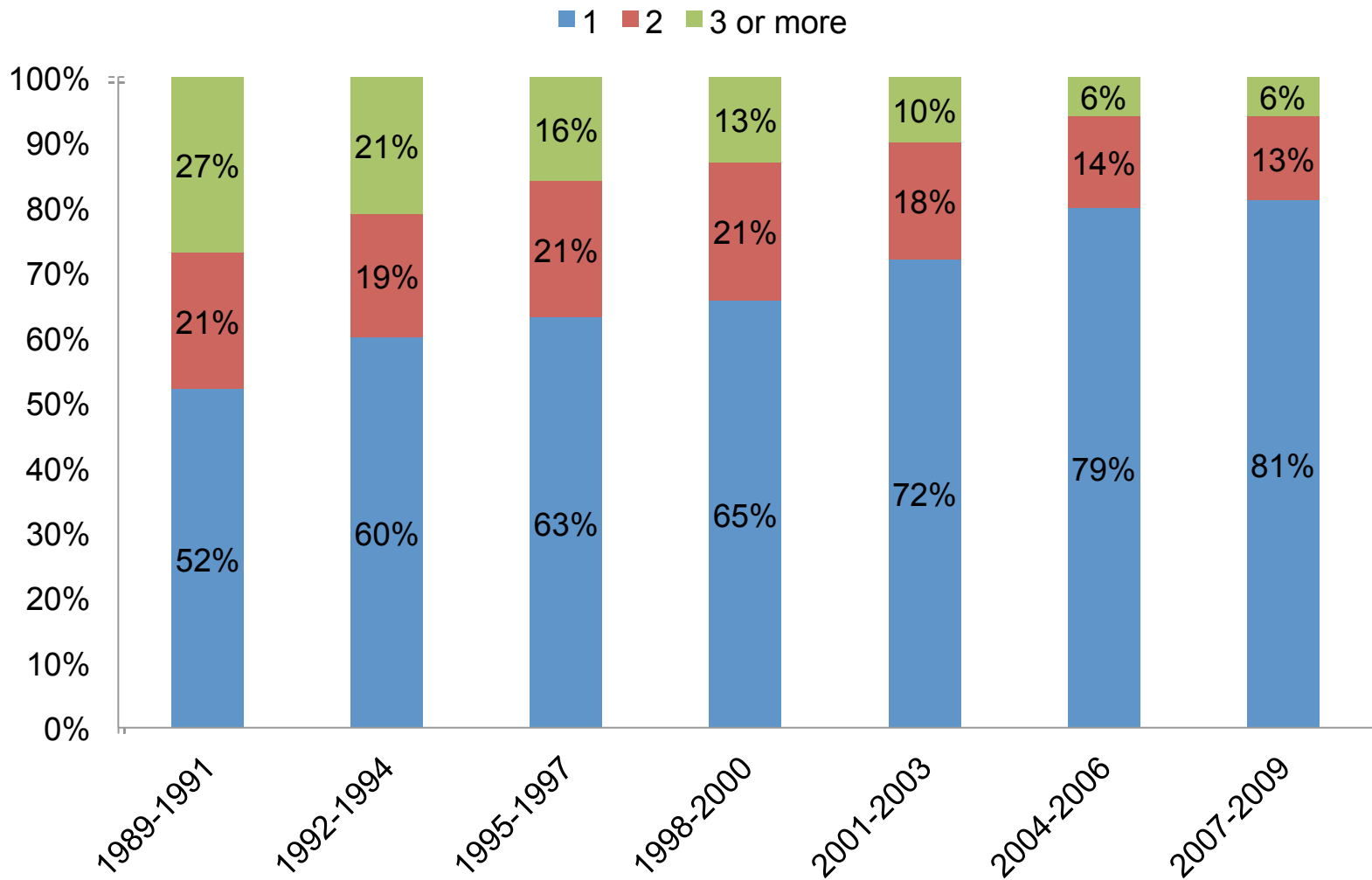
Demographics Summary

- The Mexico-born peaked at 79 percent in 1998-2000.
- The average age of crop workers has increased more in recent periods; it is now 36.
- The share of unauthorized workers has remained roughly 50 percent since 2001.
- The share of farm workers who migrate has been decreasing.
- An increasing share of immigrant crop workers is naturalizing.
- The share of mixed-status families is increasing.

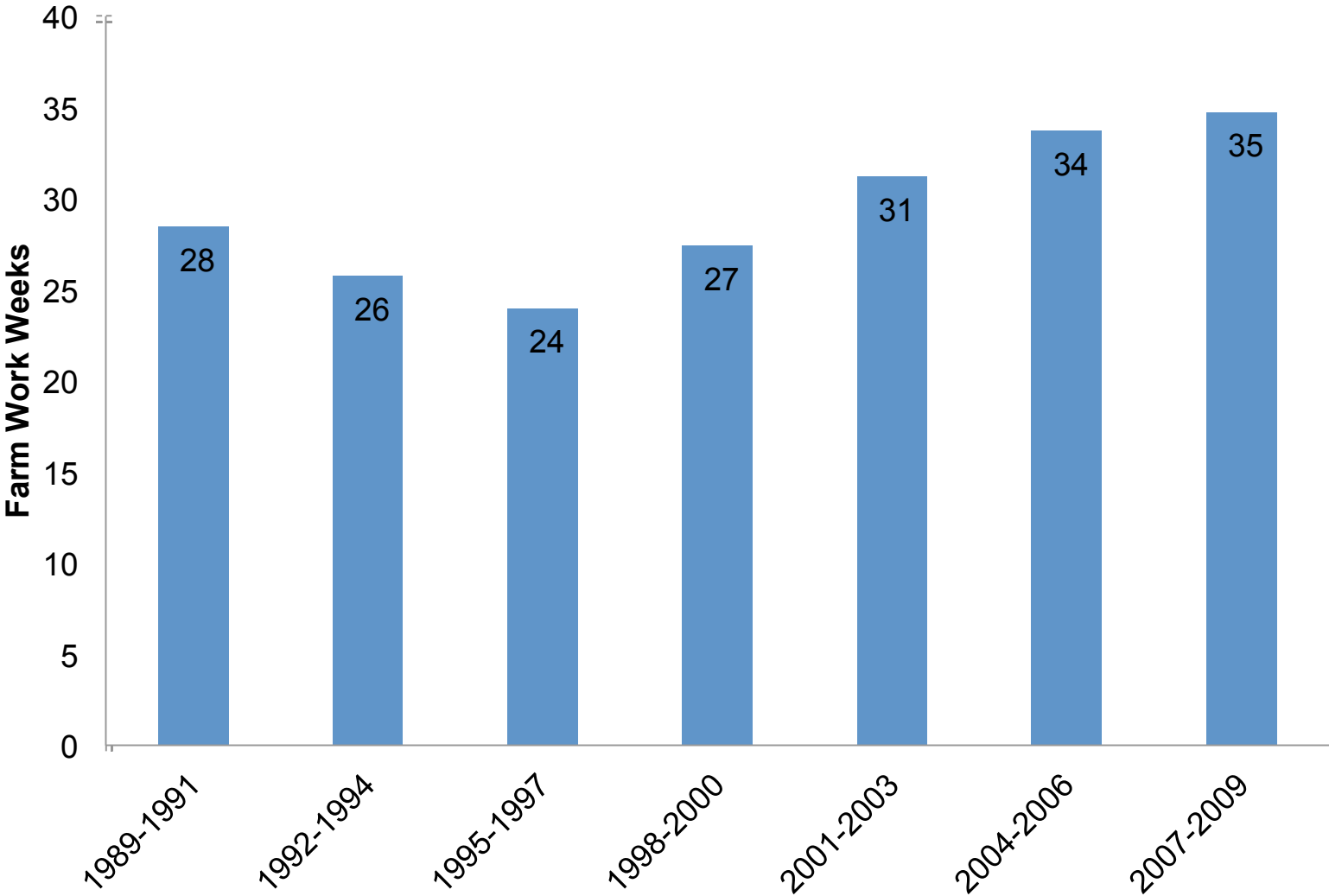
Employment Years of U.S. Farm Work Experience



Number of Farm Employers Per Year



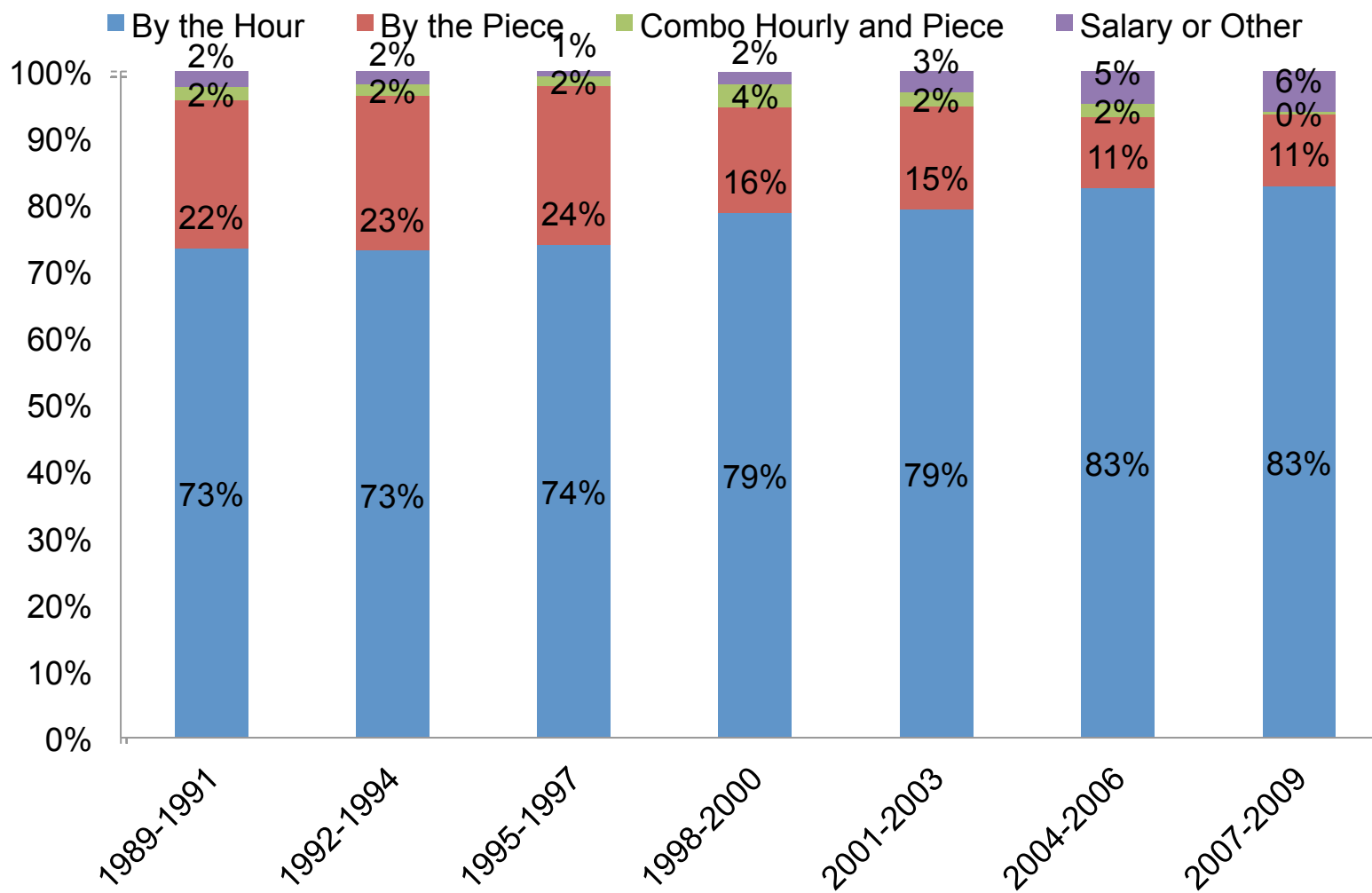
Average Number of FW Weeks



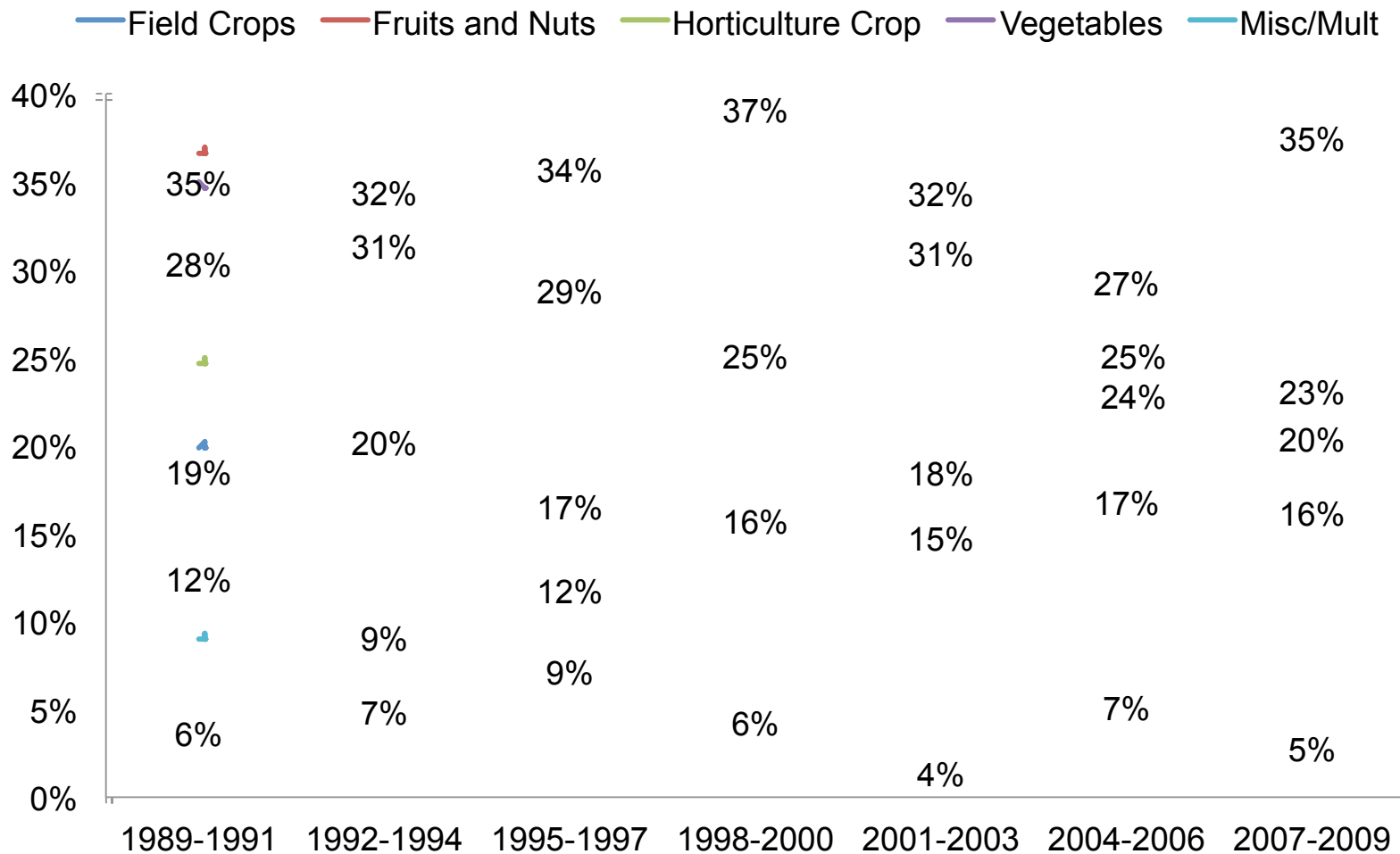
Employment Type



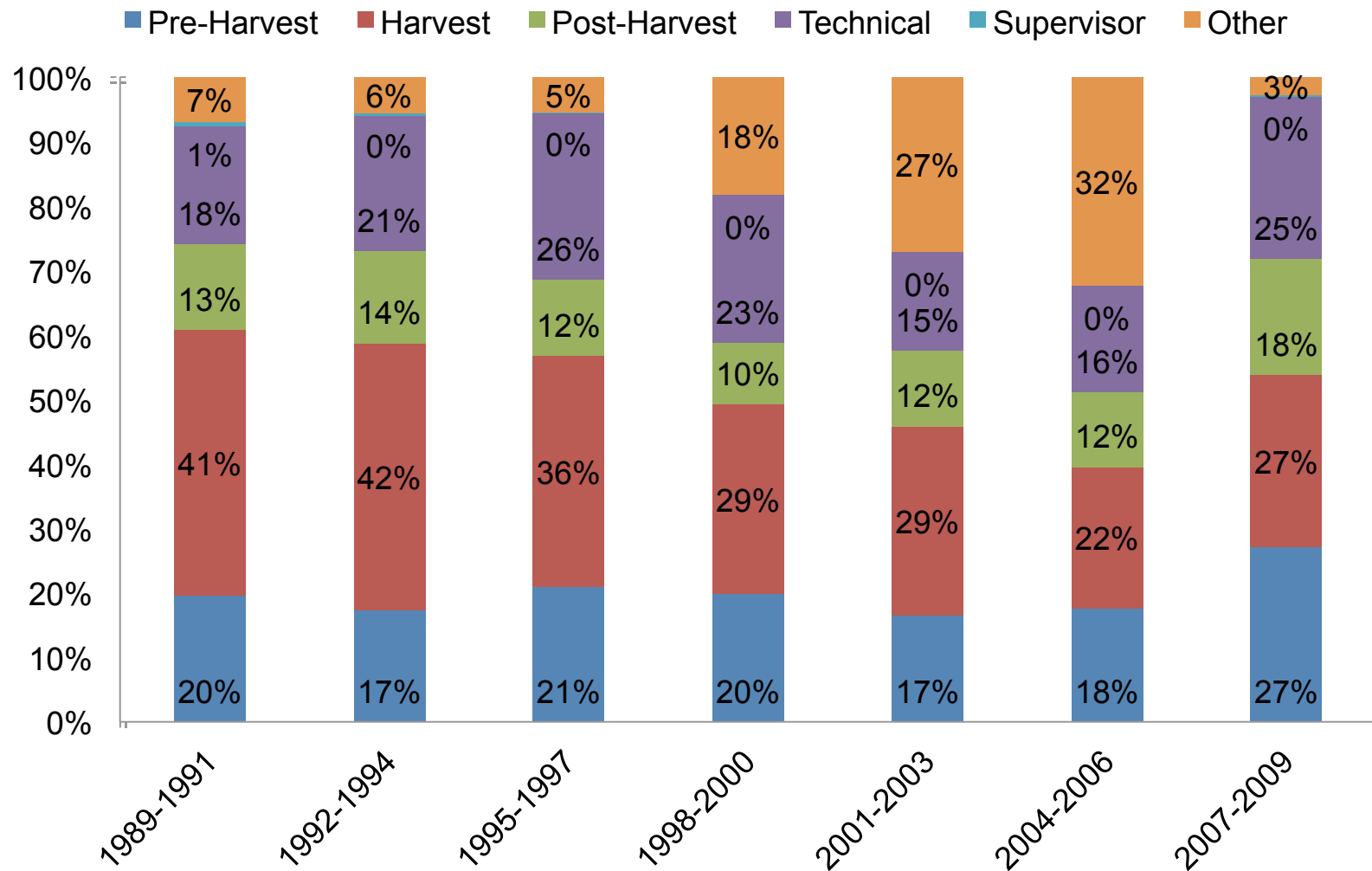
Payment Method



Primary Crop at Time of Interview



Primary Task at Time of Interview



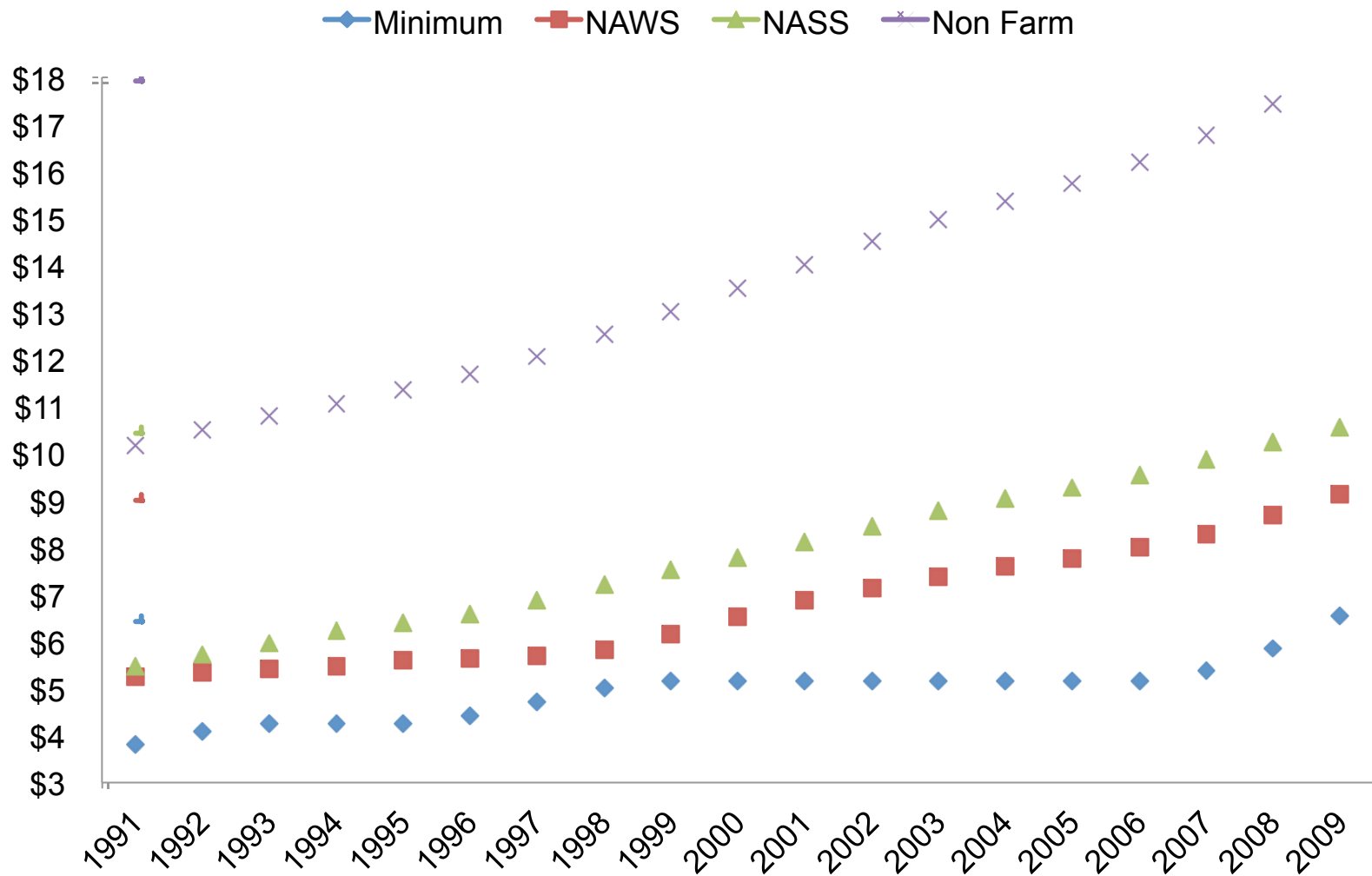


Employment Summary

- U.S. farm workers have an average of 13 years of U.S. farm work experience, which has been steadily increasing since the 1998-2000 period.
- Crop workers are performing more weeks of farm employment per year.
- The vast majority of farm workers have one farm employer per year.

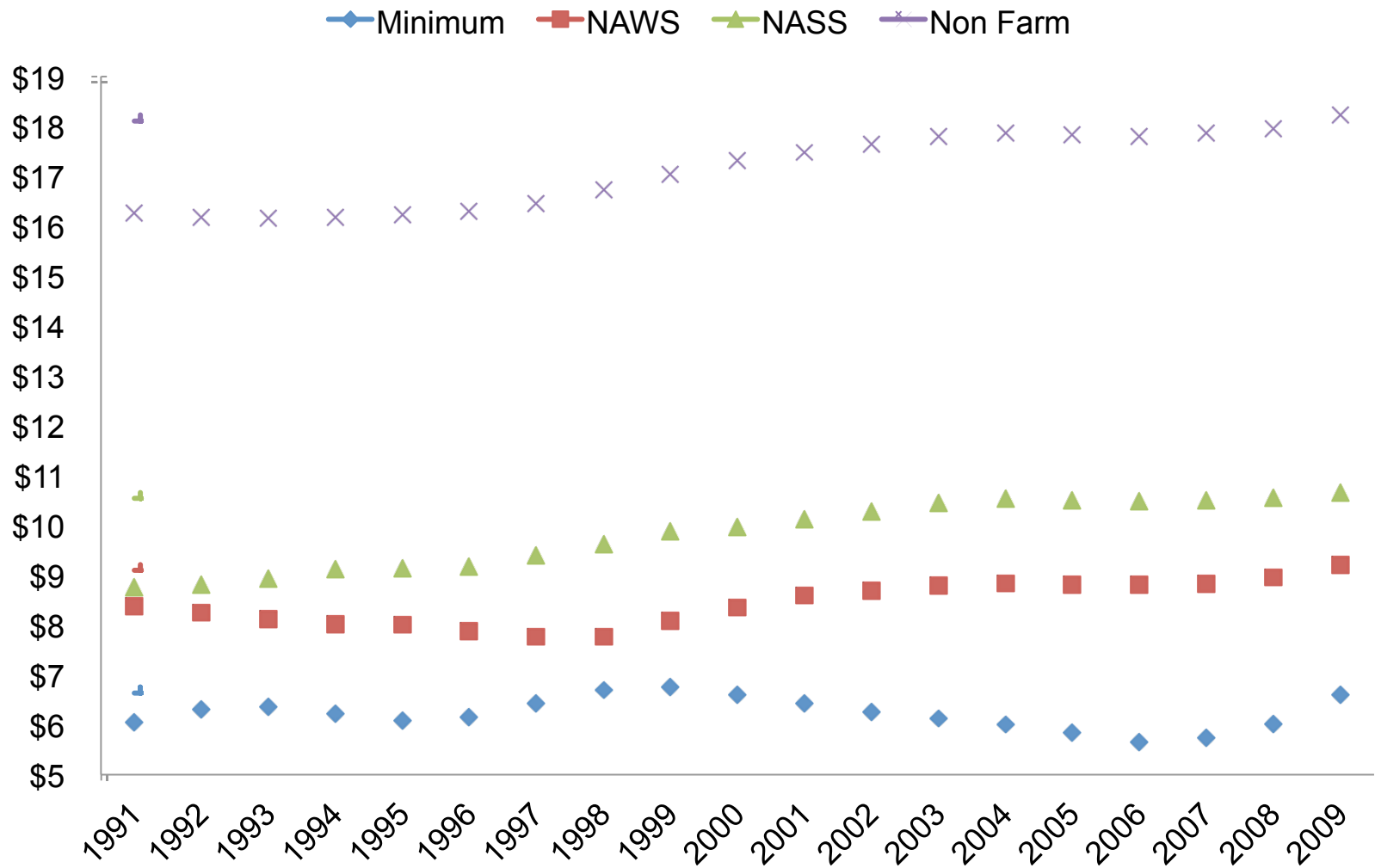
Income and Aid

Nominal Avg. Wage (Three-Yr Rolling Avg.)



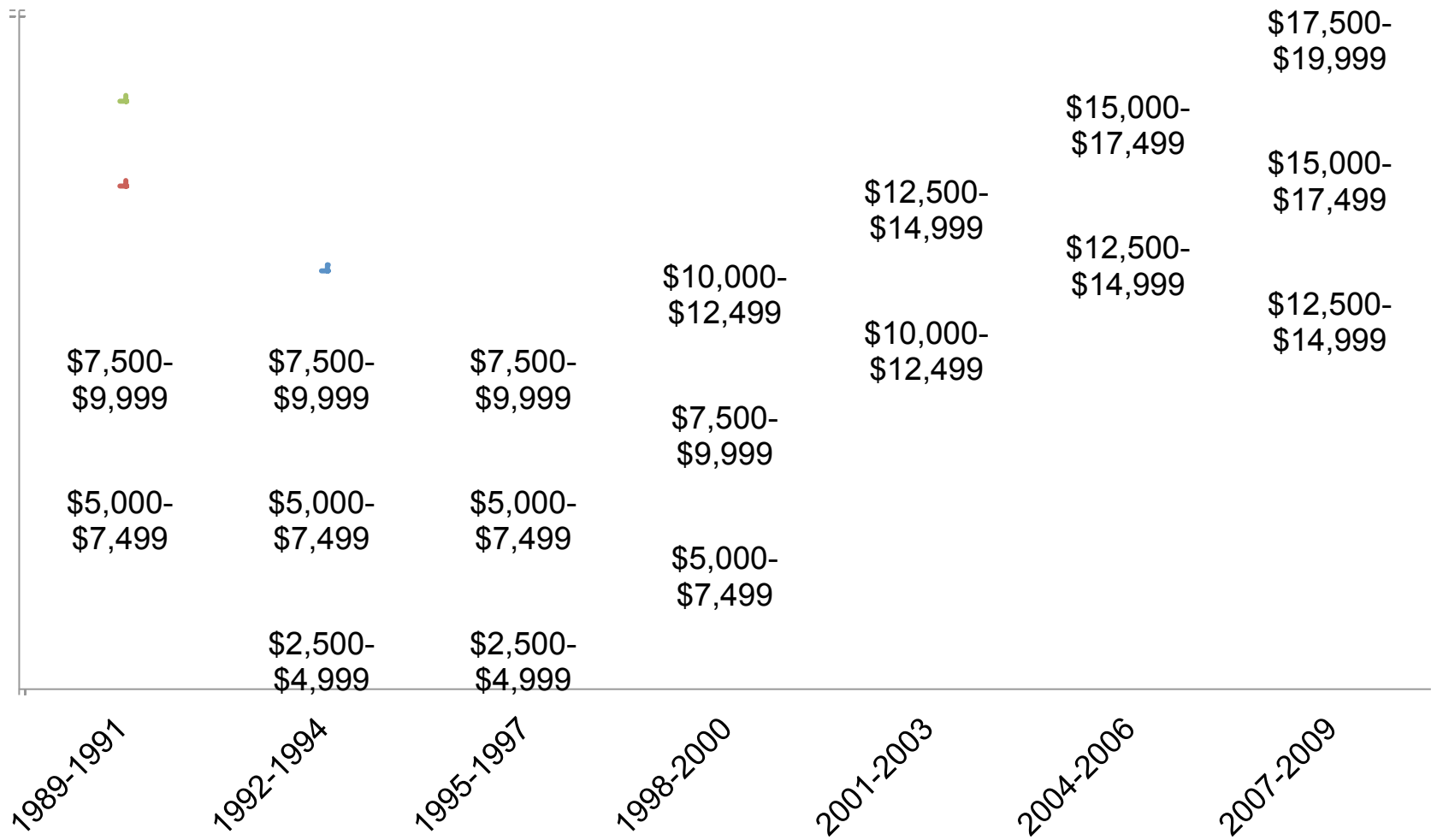
Real Average Wage

(Three-Year Rolling Average)

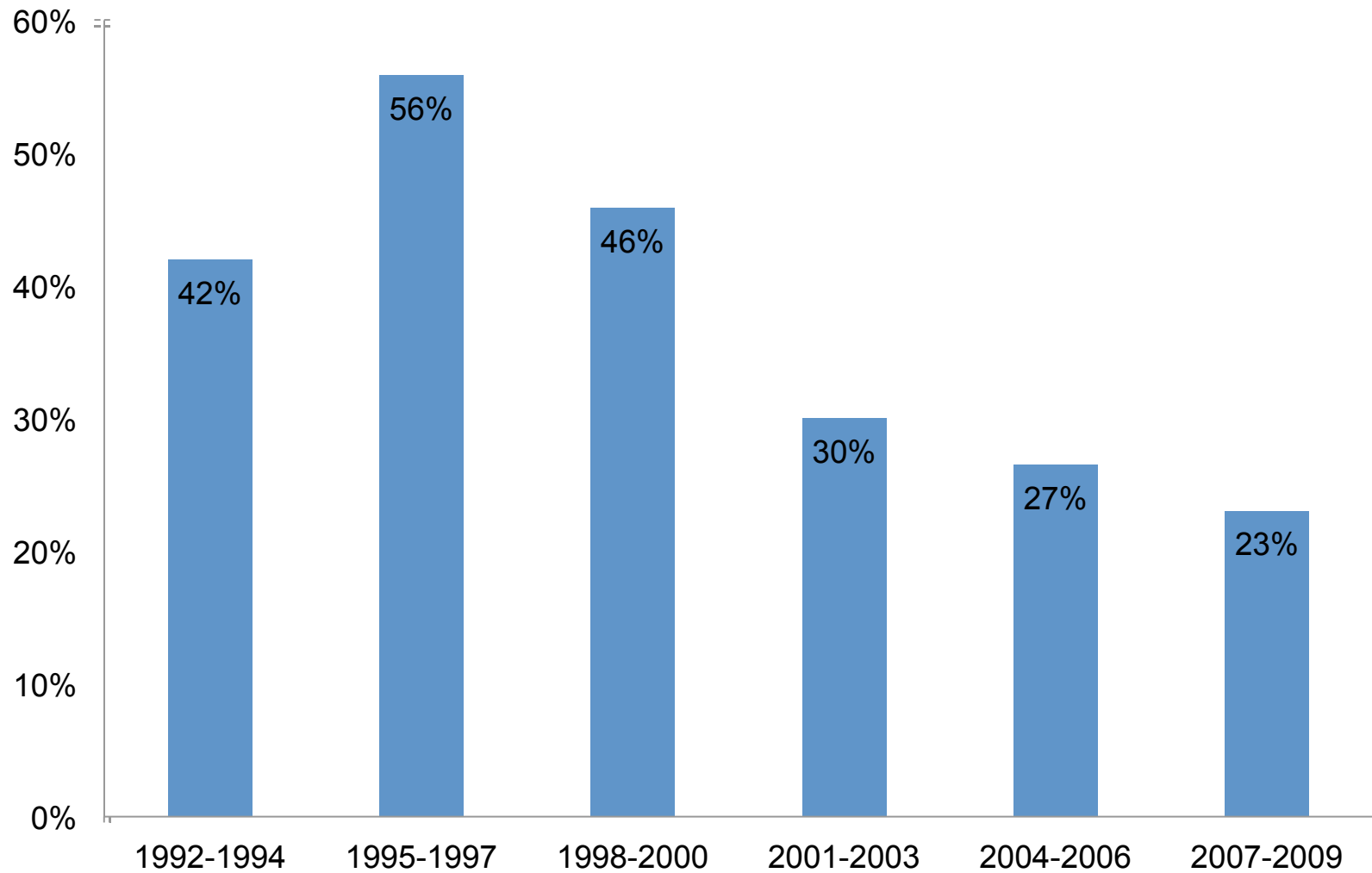


Average Income by Income Type

— Personal income (farm only) — Personal income (all sources) — Family income (all sources)

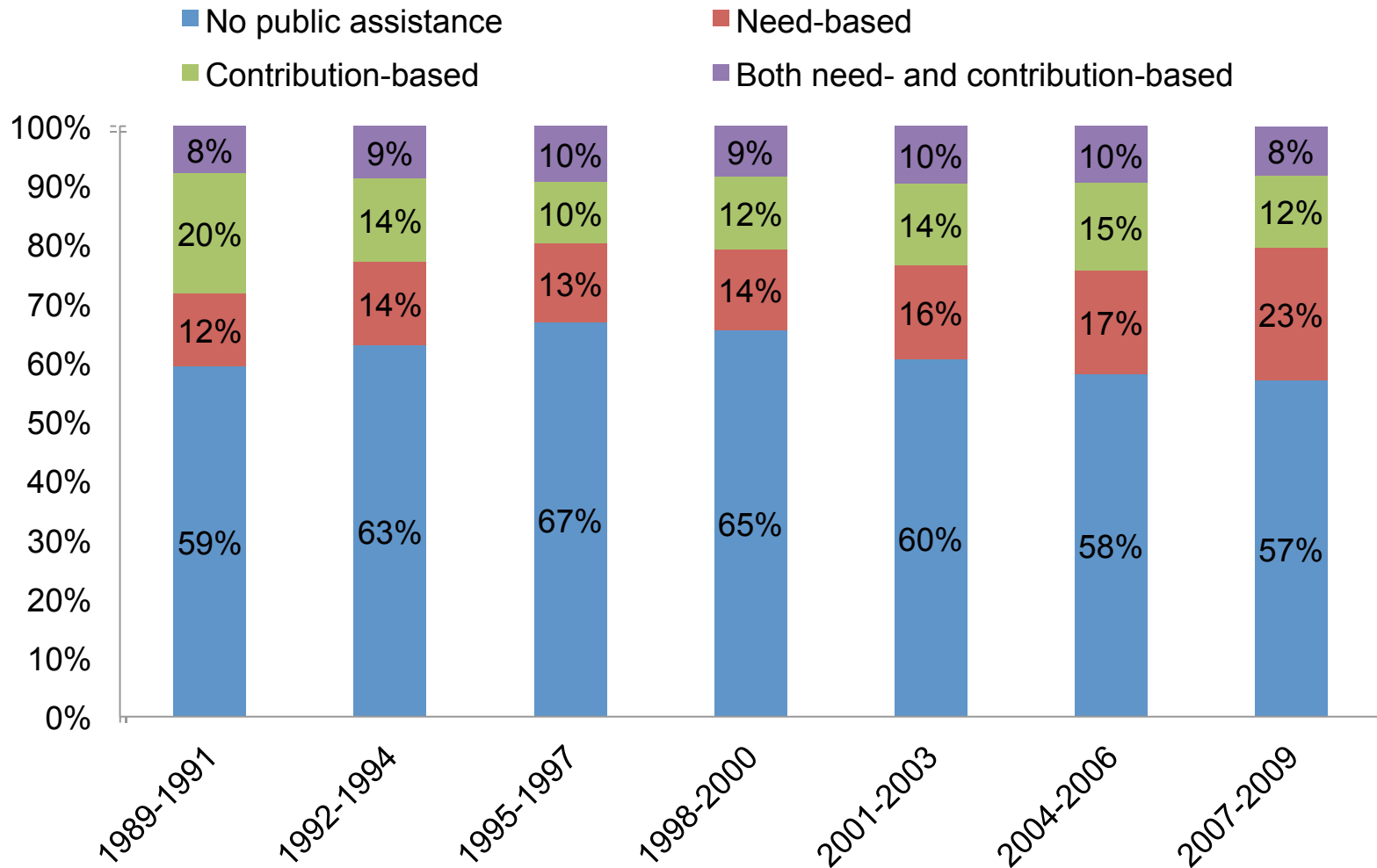


Total Family Income Below the Poverty Level



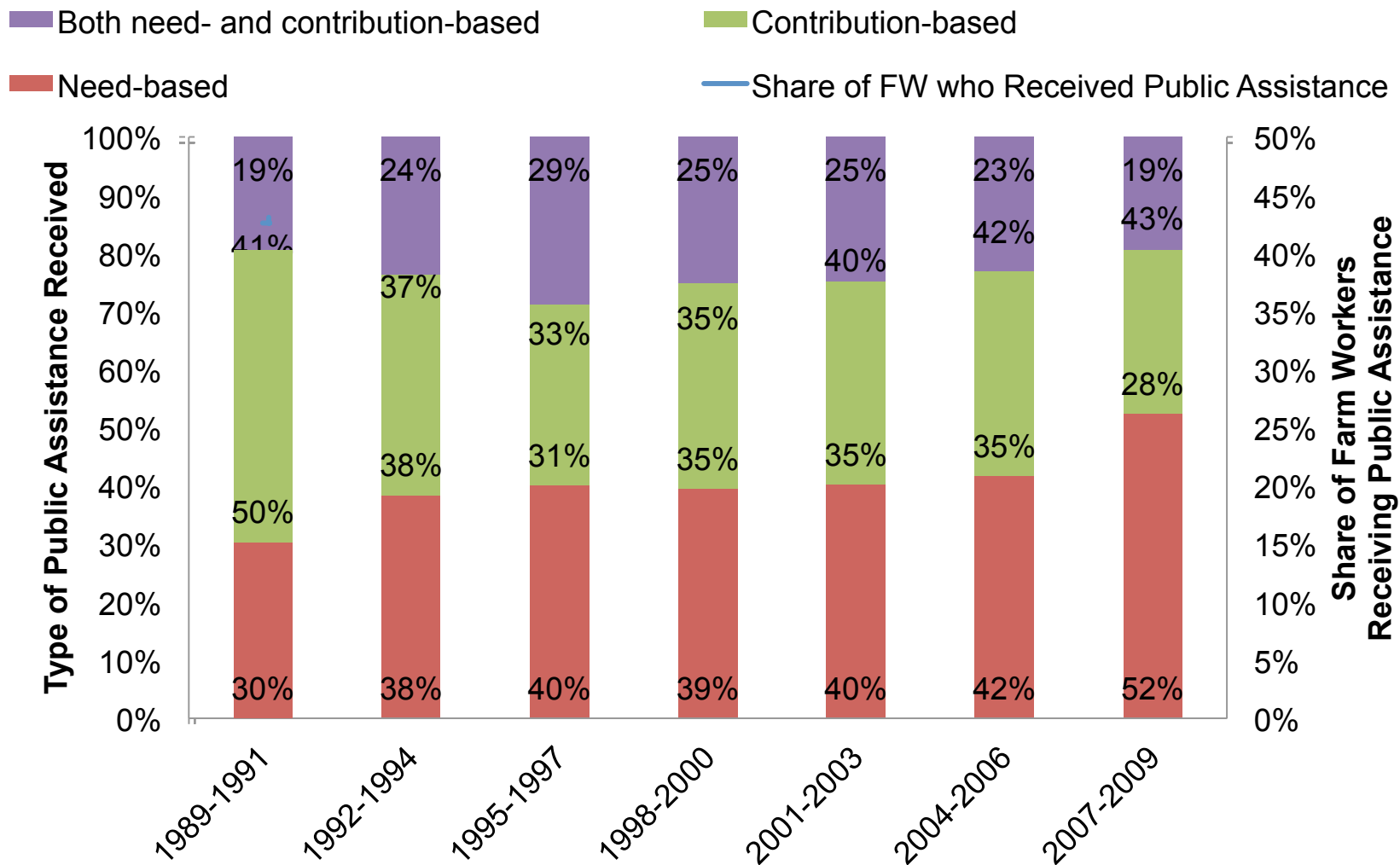
Public Assistance:

(respondent and/or family member use in the last two years)



Type of Public Assistance Received:

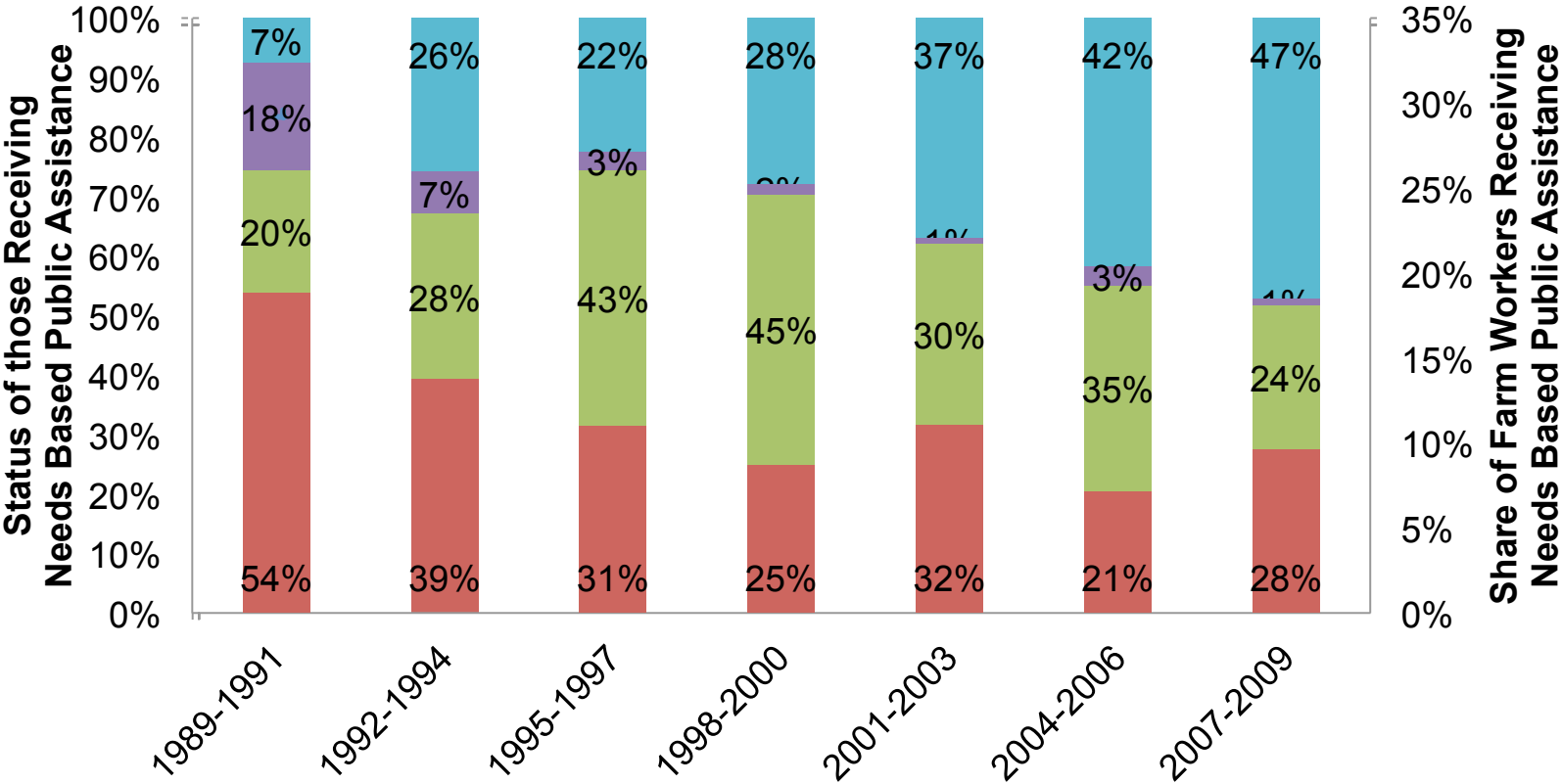
(respondent and/or family member use in the last two years)



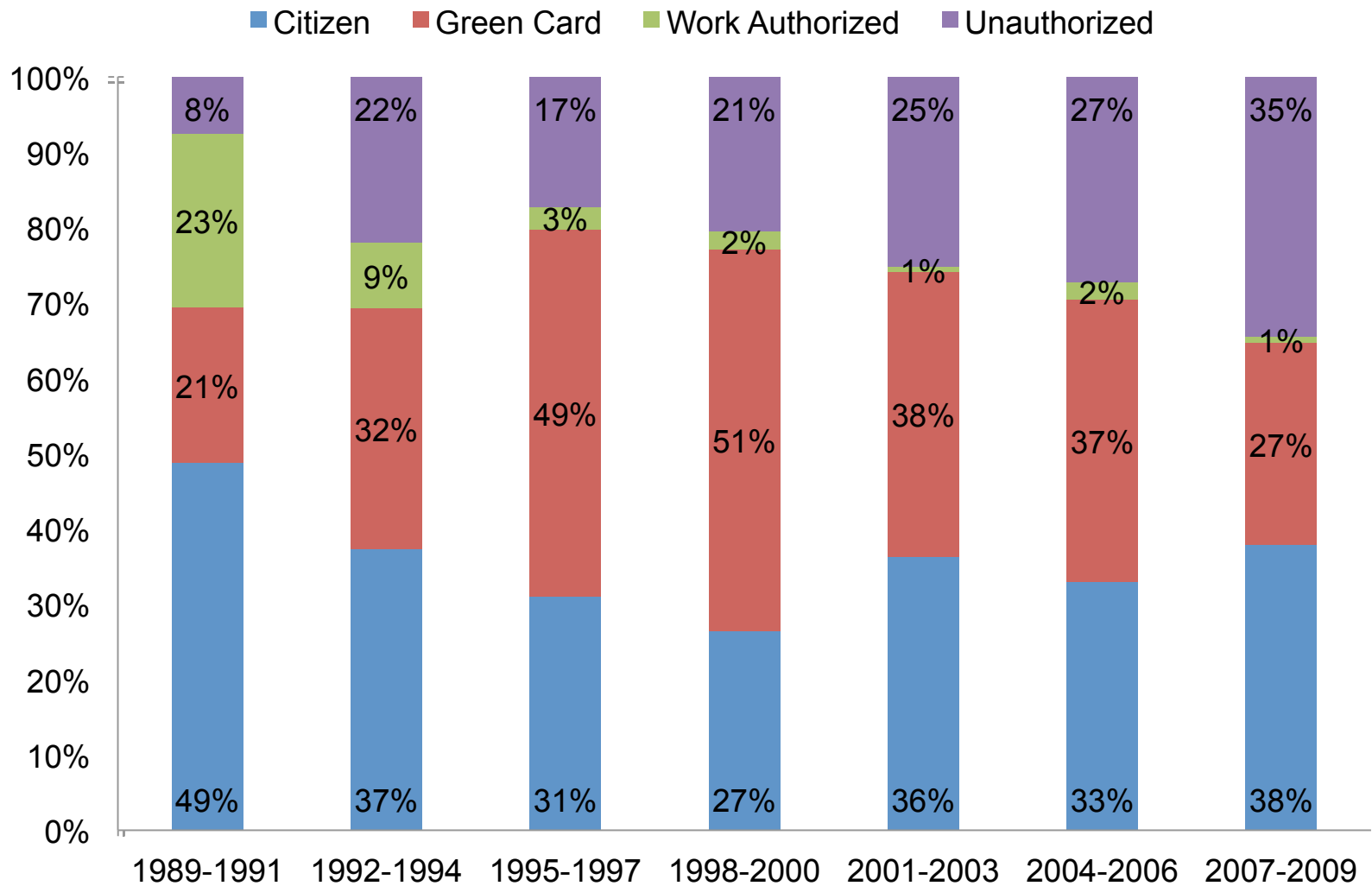
Status of Needs Based Assistance Recipients


(respondent and/or family member use in the last two years)

- Citizen
- Work Authorized
- Green Card
- Unauthorized
- Share of FW who Received Public Assistance



Status of Public Assistance Recipients: Both Types (respondent and/or family member use in the last two years)





Earnings, Income, and Public Assistance Summary

- Average hourly earning increased nominally and in real terms, but not as much as the earnings of non-farm workers.
- The share of workers with total family incomes below poverty decreased.
- The share of workers receiving public assistance increased by 30 percent between the periods 1995-1997 and 2007-2009.
- Use of needs-based public assistance increased between the periods 1998-2000 and 2007-2009, while use of contribution-based assistance decreased.



For Additional Information

- Background information on the NAWS, including survey methodology and public access data, is available at:

<http://www.doleta.gov/agworker/naws.cfm>

- Information may also be obtained from:

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